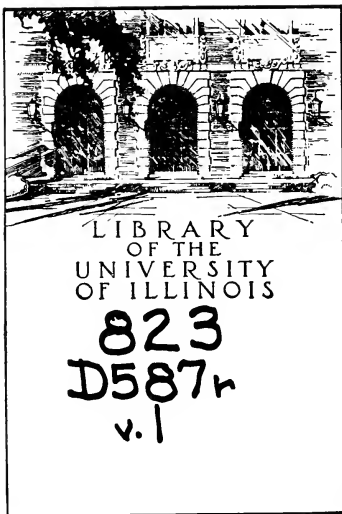


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ROSALINE DE VERE.

—————“ There is a gentle lady ;
When tongues speak sweetly, then they name her name,
And Rosaline they call her : ask for her ;
And to her white hand see thou do commend
This seal'd-up counsel.” SHAKSPEARE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON :

TREUTTEL AND WÜRTZ, TREUTTEL, JUN. AND RICHTER,
30, SOHO SQUARE.

1824.

London: Printed by C. Roworth,
Bell-yard, Temple-bar.

P R E F A C E.

COURTEOUS READER,

You have before you a singular collection of letters—are they natural or not? I say that they would be so if such characters existed. Do they exist? Surely they must have had some foundation. Must not I have painted after nature? But you will say, that I love strong lights and shades—so I do—I have passed some years in Italy; all there is *light* and *shade*.

Who, you will exclaim, can compare with Rosaline de Vere! Is she not, like the Venus de Medicis, composed of a col-

lection of women? It is true, I have met with her qualities scattered among different women; I have put them together in her, are they not in harmony? Among the millions of combinations of moral and physical forms, such a woman may have existed—possibly does exist—and probably will exist. In my opinion, it will be the gage of the high toned sentiment and intelligence of those men who fall in love with her, aye, and of those women, too, who admire her.

But then her story, her opinions, her sentiments are told in letters—how tiresome!—such is not the mode now a days. Courteous reader, recollect the two most popular Romances that ever delighted persons of good taste, were told in letters, *Clarissa Harlowe* and the *Nouvelle Héloïse*. What, you will ask, is the object of this Romance? Strange be it to say, truth—(the general

plot is not true, but most of the particular stories have occurred;) *so I think that Rosaline's sentiments and opinions are true*; as to the opinions of the others, the reader may adopt them or not as he chooses—for all I care. Oh, sacred truth! thou pure goddess whom I adore—this—this book, is the oblation of my heart, that I place upon thy holy altars—to thee I dedicate it—let thy votaries foster it, and I am satisfied. Adieu!

NAMES OF THE PRINCIPAL PERSONS.

ENGLISH.

ROSALINE DE VERE.

MAJOR DE VERE.

MRS. BARBARA BELMONT.

SIR ARTHUR ATHERSTONE.

SIR REGINALD LASCY.

COLONEL FELIX M'CARTHY.

DR. ALEXANDER M'LAURIN.

HANNAH, HIS DAUGHTER.

ITALIAN.

COLORINDA DI TORRI, A FLORENTINE.

THE MARQUIS DI TORRI.

RINALDO COUNT DI ROCCA ST. CACCIANO.

PIETRO PERRUVINI.

FRENCH.

MADAME LA MARQUISE DE B——.

THE COUNT DE MONTVALIANT.

THE CHEVALIER DE ST. VALERY.



*The Scenes lie in England, Italy, and France.—
The Period is Seven Months.*

ROSALINE DE VERE.

MRS. BARBARA BELMONT TO SIR ARTHUR ATHER-
STONE.

Bath, November 2d.

I KNOW not what excuse to make to you for having allowed the agreeable correspondence, which had subsisted for so long a period between us, to drop on a sudden; are we widows more suspicious than maidens? can we venture to go on trifling so long with true sentiment? or, do we understand sooner, or discern more quickly, the drift of a concealed passion? I own our correspondence has given me considerable pleasure; and, if my vanity had kept it alive, my prudence has compelled me to

stay it for a while. But with a man of your fine feeling and proverbial discretion, if I entertain a certain reserve, at all events I fancy I may now have little occasion for chilling caution;—let then my thoughts flow freely into your mind, where I doubt not but they will find a congenial receptacle. I confess to you that I began to fear that we were proceeding a little too fast; the tenor of your last letters was overspread with that warm tint, which your pen must have imbibed in Italy. And let me assure you, Sir Arthur, that a widow of seven-and-twenty, who has been told that she was handsome, and moreover who has been at large for five years, is not quite so frozen by either age or habit, as not to run some risk of being thawed by the contagion of your wit and feeling; accept then my excuse for my abrupt silence, and let me leave off trifling. I should no longer be a flirt, which I have often heard you say is hardly pardonable after five-and-twenty. In truth, I wish I could philosophize and look out for compensations in life. My natural cheerfulness makes me much inclined to become an optimist, and then I could argue thus—as time flows on and the beauties of the person begin to wane, the beauties of the mind

increase, because we have more experience, therefore we are wiser. Admirable logician! you will exclaim; but I am not made for a philosopher; no, indeed, neither for the sternness of Stoics nor the insipidity of the Platonists. If I must belong to a sect, to please so learned a professor in these things as you are, Sir Arthur, let me be enrolled in the easy, gay Epicureans, who made and taught friendship as a virtue, and then let friendship be the fence or boundary of the range of my heart. But, may I ask, do you really think that the fine passion, as the French term it, is always to be contained within a certain time—that it is the exclusive attribute of extreme youth? I fancy, on its declaration, the dexterity of the tongue makes ample amends for the loss of the flexibility of features, for the absence of dimples and youthful freshness; as far as this proposition regards our sex, I bow with deference to your superior knowledge; but I am sure it is true with regard to yours. Were we enabled to inspect the records of gallantry of our acquaintance, and to elicit from them a candid reply, how many a nymph would have confessed her fall—more to the fascination of her lover's tongue than to the regularity of youth-

ful features? But I am beginning to prose.—Knowing how artless I am, you will not be displeased with my simplicity. Now hear the real excuse of this epistle, with all its formal preamble. Is it to put you in good humour to do a commission for me? On the contrary; I am too condescending to confer on you a signal favour. I expect shortly an importation from Italy. It is neither a picture nor a statue; but a fit model for the ablest professors of both these arts to exercise their genius upon. It is a woman, just twenty years of age, who joins, if report speaks true, the perfection of youthful personal, to mature mental charms. It is my far-famed niece, Rosaline de Vere. I have said enough to provoke your curiosity, excite your criticism, and awaken your gallantry; when I hear of her arrival, I shall send you her address, and expect from you a most detailed report; such as may become a member of the Royal Society, or enthusiast of the *belle arti*, and a calm critic on female beauty.

I am very dull here, Sir Arthur; I have made my health and the waters the excuse to avoid the duller society and monotony of a country-house at this dull season of the year; and, as I am no

fox-hunter, I cannot discover the extreme delight of being closeted with three or four tale-bearing, tale-scribbling, scandal-talking women all the morning, to enjoy a dull game of whist and take part in the somniferous, meagre chit-chat of the evening; though I am aware that it is not *place* but *circumstances* that contribute to our tedium or pleasure. And believe me, my dear Sir Arthur, when I declare, that I am relieved from the one, and that I feel the enjoyment of the other, when I have the opportunity of subscribing myself,

Your's, most sincerely,

BARBARA BELMONT.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Bath, November 5th.

THEY are arrived! Your commission of inspection was made out in my last letter; I have now only to furnish you with the *carte du pays*. Be patient and attend; listen to a long family matter-of-fact statement; there would neither have been good sense nor good breeding in my wearying you with prolix details respecting my family in the course of our acquaintance, which has been maintained rather by the sprightly sallies of easy conversation, than fixed upon any basis of more solid *confidence*. Now, however, the case is altered; I stand in need of your good offices, so much admired as you are; and, if I may coin a new phrase, so much *expanded* upon the world as you have been; therefore, without either blushing or apologizing for the compliment, I proceed.

Major de Vere, my brother-in-law, is certainly a collateral descendant of one of the most illustrious houses that has adorned English story. I am neither an herald, nor a maker or forger of pedigrees, nor much of an historian; let his name

stand for proof. He succeeded an exceedingly dissipated and profligate father, who left him a large country-house, some old portraits and oak trees, and a huge antique library; a small estate covered over with a plentiful load of debt, so dexterously contrived and ambiguous as to leave grounds for interminable law-suits. Under these circumstances, Aubry de Vere, the person in question, whilst yet a youth, entered into the army; and, after thirty or forty years drudgery, during which time he has made nearly the circuit of the globe, he quits the service with the rank of major. Whom is he to blame? None but his ill-fated *stars*; they have uniformly conducted him from the place where he should have been, to the place where he should not have been; he has ever been a moment too soon, or a moment too late; moreover, he has had accusations brought against him, and has been tried by courts-martial, when he ought to have been rewarded for his zeal; and he has been engaged in duels by the overflowings of the milk of human kindness, in his endeavours to appease the strife and smother the wrath of others. Although one of the poorest officers in his regiment, swindlers and

gamblers have made him their mark. And, notwithstanding he is a great mathematician, and most learned in the art of war, his plans, confessed to be excellent, have mouldered away, neglected and moth-eaten, in the pigeon-holes of some colonial public office.

If I remember right, his figure was uncommonly handsome; his port noble and commanding; the warmth of his heart was as proverbial as the soundness of his head; and his easy flowing courtesy and conversation made him the centre and delight of every circle of society—even from the highest to the lowest orders. He was the best husband to my poor sister that any woman could be blest with—saving his untoward fortunes, which constantly grappled with her tender heart; so that they wore it out with hope deferred, until at length she sunk into the grave, and thus dissolved the doleful partnership. Bankrupt of every joy, saving that of love and sympathy, allow me, in passing, to drop a tear on the memory of her, who will, as long as life warms my breast, reside embalmed in that breast.

It is now six years since he lost his beloved wife—she who had clung to him during his mis-

fortunes, and who had furnished the sole compensation for the bitterest of them. As soon as I had myself recovered from the dreadful blow, which the intelligence of her death had stunned me with, I urged Major de Vere to repair to England; but the desolation which his grief occasioned in his bosom required a kindred desolation of society. This cruel blow of the fates was struck at Gibraltar, and he hastily embarked with his only child Rosaline, for Leghorn; he could not bear even the countenances of his brother officers.—Is not this quite natural? The master-key of his affections being broken, it could no longer unlock his heart to secondary objects. The loss of one dear object removes for a while all others immediately out of the atmosphere of our affections. Had I urged him at that moment to have given me up Rosaline, he probably would have consented; for she had become indifferent to him. At the close of the year, I renewed my intreaties to him, in order to her being placed under my care. The case was then altered. The glimmerings of his former affection for his wife then were attracted by, and fixed themselves on, his daughter; and, to rive them asunder, would

have gone near to have extinguished the feeble flame of life that remained in him. Thus was this fair blossom abandoned, as it were, to a self-taught education. Thus was she to be tossed about by the storm of the passions of her own untutored youthful heart, until time and experience had formed her character ; or, to use a more philosophical phrase, should have modified her being. Six years has she been left to her own judgment ; her ill-fated, grief-stricken father's eyes only gloating on her the while. He found refuge in the doctrines of necessity ; and surrendered at discretion, into the arms of inevitable fate. She, like a beautiful wild flower on a mountain, has budded and blown, agitated by every wind, and pelted by every storm, until her character and her opinions must have been as invigorated as the mountain herbs, which blow spontaneously, fresh, healthy and strong, but exposed to be cropped by every way-faring passenger. I tremble at the fearful risk which she has run ! What obstinacy may not have been engendered in her character ! What erroneous opinions may she not have imbibed ! Her fond father, in his letter, boasts of her being “ the child

of nature, and the pupil of reason." I tremble with anxiety to see how this description of her character will ultimately develope itself. What are we to expect from a young creature, born with every attribute of the happiest of her sex—wit, beauty, talents—left, from fourteen years of age to twenty, without any rudder or compass, but the natural feelings of her heart, and the natural light of her understanding?

How great is my confidence in you, when I thus open myself! What greater proof of that confidence, than to give you a commission, with such ample information to enable you to perform it! Ponder over what I have written—examine with care—search with penetration—and report with candour; and you will then entitle yourself to be favourably inscribed on the tablets of one, who is ever pleased to inscribe herself,

Most sincerely your's,

BARBARA BELMONT.

SIR ARTHUR ATHERSTONE TO MRS. BELMONT.

London, November 9th.

You are a most wayward creature. From the warmest habits of friendship, from daily intercourse and confidential correspondence, you jump into an interregnum of three months silence, and I into three months neglect or disdain. How am I to construe it? I will not say despair, for you are a lady of fashion, and of the world. That frightful word *despair* has long since been struck out of the tablets of ladies of your caste.

I accept the good omen of your future favour on the return of your correspondence, and on the interesting and confidential trust that you have reposed in me. I shall now prove myself, I hope, not unworthy of that trust, by the assiduity with which I have endeavoured to discharge it. Let me therefore proceed forthwith in my report.

I was much struck with the first appearance of Miss de Vere. But I take the credit to myself exclusively, because it was owing to my being somewhat of a connoisseur in the fine arts. I was struck as a dilettante,—possibly, she will not

strike persons generally, until some great authority has made her pass current by the stamp of their approbation, which is necessary in this gregarious town, where a name or two can put a player or a preacher in vogue—where we are apt to follow the bell-wether, and flock on all occasions together like sheep.

Miss de Vere, therefore, runs the risk of not being at first pronounced a striking beauty; nor is the Venus de Medicis, with every one, for I have seen many fine people flaunt out of the tribune of the gallery at Florence, and exclaim: Is this all? Yes, I own it is all. And what greater compliment can be paid to Praxiteles or Phidias? Harmony is not striking, whilst deformity is; and I can give you no greater proof of your niece's perfection of form, than when I declare that I can neither designate her as tall or short, or fat or thin—as slow or quick in motion. This is the result of exquisite proportion, joined with exquisite grace. She is fair, but with shade. Her habitual attitude is that of reclining repose, more for the purpose of meditation and observation, than sloth or listlessness. For though in such a state of habitual repose, her senses are all alert—

her forehead is expansive—and outswelling over her eyes, indicating great room for the action of the brain, and showing that it has already been years at work, so as to enlarge its outward casement. Her eye, for so young a person, has receded into its socket—marking how much communing it has had with that brain, and how little it has gazed on vacancy. That eye has different shades, according as different objects strike its retina; in a state of repose, it is covered over with an haze, which shows how much the brain behind is at work; but in a moment it is lit up, the haze is dissipated, and then it flashes with the highest intellectual fire—rather than sparkles with careless joy—its colour then becomes a dark blue—clear, penetrating, and steady; it sinks again into a greyish hazy cast. The vigour of her mind seems to have made some inroad upon the freshness of her visage: here are no ruddy plump milk-maid cheeks; but feeling and intelligence occasionally warm and illuminate the most regular and classic features, and the softest and fairest skin, where transparency delineates every flush of feeling. It is only in highly sensitive beings, that the quick flow of the blood occasions that sublime transition from white to

rose-colour or crimson; because these transitions mark the quick play of the passions. The dignity of her form and deportment crowned the whole; for I discovered that principle of self-reverence, which furnishes the ballast to the vessel, whilst the vigour of her mind tingling in her blood, at times marks her as a model for a Sibyl—a Cassandra—or an Eloïse.

Thus she is more a tragic than a comic muse: as far as regards my own taste, I confess I like the first rather represented on marble or on canvass; and I own that the system of my sympathies draws me into the attractive sphere of the second more. Will you construe this into a compliment to yourself? Which of the two is the most prudent to choose for a wife? Which of the two is the most susceptible of the deepest passion, there can be no doubt. For, here we may choose between the volatility of feeling of the one, and the intensity of passion of the other. But I should venture to draw the conclusion, that their prudence would be about equal, for their inclinations would be as they found kindred attraction; fear not, therefore, for your self-educated niece. She has, or I mistake her much, self-reverence and

pride; the surest safeguard of a woman's virtue on her side. As for formal education, formal systems and formal doctrines, we see every day that they are of no avail—you have, my dear Mrs. Belmont, some awkward prejudices, not befitting a woman of your discrimination and habits. You *give in too much to formalism*, which, indeed, is only one of those conventions of society, that the world fall into; and it extends itself then, through every department of life, public and private. We are all more or less slaves to it: we then lose sight of original principles. I am not for advocating savage or natural life, but are we not getting every day a little too formal, until we shall conclude by stifling every warm feeling, and blurring over every pleasure that could animate our being? But I begin to perceive that you are yawning, so, adieu. Whenever you preach to me, be assured, you shall receive a Roland for your Oliver. But believe me more, when I add, that I remain,

Most truly and sincerely,

Your devoted,

A. ATHERSTONE.

ROSALINE DE VERE TO CLORINDA DI TORRI.

London, November 10th.

My Dearest Friend,

THE letters which I have written to you during my journey, were trifling. I could not lose sight of you—I strove to converse—I mixed up a sad jumble of sorrow for our separation. Observations upon the road, the country, and the sights, all of which I scarcely saw, and do not remember, whilst the real concern of my heart was, where can I, where shall I find compensation for the loss of my dearest Clorinda's society? Is it essential to friendship for its votaries to be perpetually present to each other? Does occasional absence reinvigorate its bonds—tie them faster together—and enhance the value of that greatest of all human delights—friendship; that I have yet felt by insinuating into the bosom some alloy of temporary uneasiness and alarm? Yes, such cruel separation makes trial of the first of human virtues—constancy of mind. Aye, constancy of mind,

as the basis, and friendship, for the superstructure, are two of the noblest attributes or adjuncts of our being. For can either of these coincide with selfishness? No, my friend. The noble sentiments of your heart are a foil to that original sin of our birth, and which unhappily passes current through the world under the most specious disguises, which assumes the loftiest flights of human enterprize. But I am satisfied with that balm which pure and virtuous friendship administers to a troubled mind. In it I find a consolation for the fallen fortunes of our house. It is often more sacred than instinct. Our instinctive affections are accompanied by duty and gratitude to our own blood. But often are they cold and sickly from the want of the cement of friendship. When thus connected the delight is intense. But I, whose circle of natural affections are confined to one remaining parent, who want those props and stays of our existence—brothers and sisters—to fence out the cold winds that blow from all quarters of an unfeeling and selfish world, fly to that sympathy, which I trust has invariably grappled your heart with mine. Think not such

strains too warm. Born under a tropical sun, the maid of the West Indies thus addresses the maid of Italy. Possibly in this particular may the original cords of the attraction lay, that drew us together. Believe me, Clorinda, neither the new theatre that I am now reluctantly forced upon, nor all the conventional civilities, or the pleasure of making new acquaintances, (I will not say *friendship*,) for one moment shall efface your image from my mind. Those who live in a state of indifference, live in a state of half their being—They quench the noblest part of it; that is, anxiety and care after things noble and generous. When the Stoics were accused of indifference, it was not what was ordinarily meant by that phrase; it was indifference towards things indifferent, (and that means those things, which touch not the highest cords of our heart, or excite not the purest ray of our intelligence.) Thus, have I shortly discharged to you my first duty. A repetition of such a declaration, which never in the six delightful years of our friendship have I made to you before, would be fulsome after this day to urge again; but I have taken a new point of departure, and this letter is

he charter under which I now sail. Lock up its sentiments in your bosom, as the most sacred deposit of her feelings, who is unalterably

Your friend, your true friend,

ROSALINE DE VERE.



CLORINDA DI TORRI TO ROSALINE DE VERE.

Florence, October 20th.

SHORTLY, my dearest friend, after you had taken your departure, my mother importuned me with more earnestness and more ill-humour than ever upon the hateful subject, which all our stratagems had hitherto diverted. How cruel was this when my eyes were suffused with tears, and my bosom convulsed with sobs, for the first sad affliction that the fates have yet visited me with! Are stupid conventions of society and mere formalities to contravene one of the primeval dictates of nature—the free unbiassed choice of our mates?

To force a husband on a woman, contrary to her free choice, is to quench at once the most sacred of her natural affections, and to overturn the first object of her being—to introduce discord into her existence.

But your advice has not yet passed away like a summer shower, nor has the six years clashing of our intelligence, and intermingling of our sentiments, left so little impression upon me, that I am likely to surrender at discretion. To your penetrating and powerful mind, I owe these first principles of right, that I feel I shall have strength enough ever to make the rule of my conduct. You have been my pioneer in the rugged and intricate path, which led to the discovery of the true natural affections, and of pure reason; these shall, I hope, be the constant monitors in my breast and in my mind. How often have I listened to you, my instructress, when you have held dissertations upon this copious theme; when you have said that all institutions, public and private, that all habits, conventions of society, usages and customs have first sprung out of these abundant sources, sentiment and the natural affections! But that selfishness, in which is contained every vice and every

crime, has soon extinguished those glorious lights, that is, our true affections and our pure reason, and has left us to wander in the most frightful darkness. If my language is warm, excuse an Italian heart, at the tender moment of separation from the idol of its devotion, and, above all, the moment of cruel persecution. I had intended a longer letter. I can now scarcely call a moment my own. Stupid and base persons mock me as romantic, the nickname that cowardice and selfishness ever gratuitously bestow upon honesty and zeal. Methinks I still hear the silver tones of your voice pouring into my ear the honeyed words of truth: trace them again, over again, upon paper; let our mutual flights transcend the vulgar bounds of formalism and conventions, which are only established on egotism. And let us prove to those, who may chance to inspect our correspondence, that virtue and liberty can coexist. Adieu, my dear friend, I embrace you a thousand times.*

CLORINDA.

* The original of this letter was in Italian.—The ladies wrote each in their own language, and then made it a duty each to translate afterwards.

ROSALINE TO CLORINDA.

London, November 11th.

YOUR's arrived just after I had ended my letter to you. The subject in hand is one of the greatest delicacy that can engage the attention of a woman. It is beset with difficulties, because the decision of it lies between conflicting duties. Indeed this matter requires the utmost management and care. I shall endeavour to give you my advice, and to trace out the line which I think you should pursue; and, in so doing, I shall strive to avoid all animation of sentiment or warmth of language: because, when we are to consult or deliberate, all passion should be laid aside. You have two duties to perform, and which should constantly occupy your most serious thoughts, the duty, which you owe to your parents—and the duty, which you owe to yourself. These then are nearly balanced, and the balance in most cases should incline to the first; because, when we ourselves are comprehended, we should ever be extremely cautious, as our own hearts must be warped towards our own desires: but let us examine

how the matter stands. Possibly, this is the only exception in which the duty of implicit obedience between parent and child may be infringed upon; because the parent, in dictating a special marriage, infringes on parental rights; because marriage is the fountain and main source of parental rights, and because the eternal law of nature, that dictates to us the continuation of human existence, is infringed, if the free choice in such a case is at all shackled; for I hold that you are contending on the part of maternal duties, when you insist upon the free choice of what must constitute you a mother; therefore, the question lies between a *mother* in being, and a *mother* in expectation; the first object of your being, that which nature has designated you for, is to be a mother. Well, then it must follow, that in the choice of *how* you are to become a mother, you ought not, according to the law of nature, and the law of reason, which are twin sisters, be obstructed in that choice. Such an interruption would constitute a derangement of all natural attraction, and would go to substitute antipathy for sympathy, which would be to invert the order of nature. I think these grounds more forcible to argue the matter upon than mere incli-

nation, because the latter holds to the sphere of pleasure, and the former to the first object of a woman's being. Put then inclination entirely out of the question; but lay all your stress upon your undoubted prerogative derived immediately from the hand of nature. If your mother urges her right by parental authority, you can then turn that argument upon her, and declare that your paternal authority in return would be weakened, or, if not, lose half its force, if an husband had been forced upon you contrary to your free choice; and that harmony must subsist between the parents, or disorder will be the inevitable consequence among the offspring. These arguments appear to me to be convincing; because they are drawn from the original fitness and unfitness of things, which are to be found in the harmony and accordances of nature. Indeed, if I chose, I could go to direct authorities in support of them. For instance, our famous Archbishop Tillotson held, that natural duties were to be placed before religious duties; or, in other words, that our duty to God was contained in our duty to our neighbour; and, therefore, he says, that a woman suckling her child is performing her duty, more than if she were taking the

sacrament. If every churchman held such language, and amazed us less with mysteries, the church would be more generally esteemed, and its ordinances more readily obeyed. I do not wish to urge too many arguments upon this head, because they may tend to weaken the main one; and I give you Tillotson's opinion for your own satisfaction, recommending you not to use it, as it might excite anger and alarm, and awaken the stupid prejudices of those formalists, by whom you are surrounded, and who, like the formalists of every country, venerate forms and understand not principles; the glorious prerogative of bigoted and ignorant heads, who thus become the prey of the designing few. That you, my dearest friend, may despise the one, and hold by the other, shall ever be the endeavours of your sincere friend to assist you in. In the mean time,

Believe me, &c. &c.

ROSALINE.

MRS. BELMONT TO SIR A. ATHERSTONE.

Bath, November 12th.

YOUR description of my niece has displeased me, and disappointed me. Displeased me,—because you have made a fine flourish of your critical powers, as a connoisseur ; and, disappointed me,—because I see nothing but a pale-faced, whimsical girl, without any real accomplishments ; and, possibly, with very eccentric notions. The world ! the world, Sir Arthur, is what I look to. To the opinion of the world—success in the world—splendid matches—great establishments—rich jointures ; these are things which my heart yearns after. And how are they to be obtained ? By a “ Sibyl ! a Cassandra ! an Eloise ! ”

You own that she is a tragic muse ; in plain English—very dull. You would like her better in marble or on canvass. And then—but really I do not know how to express it—you make up (you odd creature) by a very pretty compliment to me. I am no muse. I never had a spark of genius ; only a little easy flow of conversation.

But to be serious; your letter, like yourself, decides nothing. You have indeed, Sir Arthur, a tiresome want of decision. I must say that it is your own fault; and if you wish to have the reputation of gallantry—of being liked and admired by the ladies, you must get rid of this great fault: it is what we never forgive. Decision of character in a man affords us a sort of crutch to lean upon, to support our tottering march through life. For, susceptible of a variety of emotions, and sometimes contradictory ones, we are as continually in a state of oscillation as the pendulum of a clock; and we are oftener supported or kept steady in moments of trial, from the exact balance of contrarieties, than from any internal force. How much then do we admire a quality in you that we so seldom possess, which acts with a two-fold import, because it protects us often from evil, and sometimes furnishes us with an excuse for our little failings and slips, because we have the solid excuse of yielding to a decision that overpowers us quite! The French women have ever this sentiment in their mouths:—“ Ah! c’était plus fort que moi!”

But why have I run into this digression only to

betray to you the secrets of my sex? My letter was about my niece, but I know not why I cannot answer it now; and, if you wish to know what I intended to say, you will put yourself in your carriage and run down here. Adieu then, until I see you.

B. BELMONT.

P. S.—The conclusion of your letter was *excellent*. You, who are the most trivial of all persons—who conceive all merit rests in forms, preach against them—when you think it is your interest. Do you not think that I see through you? This prancing suits you but ill, my dear Sir Arthur.



CLORINDA TO ROSALINE.

Florence, Oct. 20th.

Who shall foresee what is to come to pass?
 Who can calculate a moment upon the future?
 Are not our plans futile, and our schemes

abortive? Oh! my dear friend, I am in an excellent path to make my escape from the dire calamities that might *enthral* the happiness of my existence. This sudden change in my fortunes springs out of the most trivial circumstances, as indeed have most of the great changes that have taken place in the condition of human affairs. I hasten to detail it to you. Yesterday we had, as usual, at dinner, my odious intended, the Abbatè, and my father's great friend, Pietro Perruvini, the mathematician; a man, whose dry penetrating genius, as you well know, is capable of unlocking the most profound secrets of nature, and possessing itself of the most abstruse sciences; and whose caustic tongue marks him to be a true Florentine. The conversation turned from the news of the day to political principles in the abstract. My intended discovered the full blown malignity of his disposition, by the most insolent and provoking approvals of arbitrary power. Pietro drew him on with the consummate skill of an acute and wily logician—the Abbatè backed him with the intemperate and indiscreet zeal of his order, when on political subjects—my mother sat swelling with pride, and her eyes sparkling

with secret satisfaction. At length the controversy grew too overwhelming for my father's generous temper to bear with. He suppressed it for a length of time, but it burst forth in a furious storm. Roused from his usual apathy, the generosity and manliness of his heart lent his tongue words, burning and copious, which dashed the feeble efforts of his antagonist into nought. In the collision my *Sposo* did not escape without some home thrusts, which made him wince and change colour. My mother bit her lip, and was flushed from crimson to blue;—she drew her breath short, and her breast heaved high and long. The Abbatè's meagre visage turned from sallow to jaundice; from pale to deadly white.—He viewed the *mathematician* with an eye of fear and malignity that was quite horrible.

The company broke up rather abruptly, and a shy civil salutation dispersed them. My mother, tossing her head back, swelling and rising on her instep, as if on wire, in an authoritative tone, cried out, Clorinda, follow me. With downcast eyes, constrained gait, and hesitating steps, I obeyed. As soon as she reached her room, her voice assumed a tone unusually soft and endear-

ing. She began by arranging and settling my dress; then taking me by the hand, she made me sit down by her :—"Clorinda," said she, "you accompany your father often to the Cabinet of Natural History to hear Pietro Perruvini explain its contents. The Advent is coming on; I expect, my dear, that you will be very attentive to your religious duties—that you will not omit to hear sermons—that you will consult the Abbate upon what homilies you are to read. I know it is irksome to confess to those with whom we live in society. I therefore leave you the free choice of all the pious and eminent spiritual directors that abound in this city, and who may be termed, the soul's confidential counsellors. I should recommend the Dominicans; they have ever been the guardians of the true faith: indeed, religion owes more, as the Abbate always says, to Saint Dominic, than to any other of the blessed saints and martyrs. I take this opportunity, my love, of mentioning this to you, because I think it necessary that there should be some counteracting power to the pernicious conversations, which you must frequently have heard to pass between Pietro and your father, and the young Count Rinaldo, whose

principles are suspected of liberalism. Pietro is a clever man—your father seems infatuated by him—but he is entirely occupied with geometry, geology, natural history, and the other atheistical sciences. He is, to be sure, very moral and reserved in his conversation and manners. But what is that cold-blooded infidel?—he never goes to confession, except once a year, at Easter, in order to procure his billet, and to prevent his name from being inscribed on the church door as a defaulter.” Here I ventured to put in a word. “Pietro, Madam,” said I, in a most submissive tone, “is not cold-blooded—no one has more ardent feelings in the cause of justice and humanity than he has. His charity outstrips his means—his good offices infringe upon his time—he abandons sometimes his mathematical calculations, to give good advice, when he lacks other means of doing good.”—“So, you young hussy, you are bit too—(Cattèrècea was the phrase). Know then, child, that good works without faith are nought. Faith will remove mountains. In short, your head is turned:—this comes from want of early discipline. Had you been kept ten years at a convent, instead of being left at home to

study prophane books all day long with that mad English girl, (*La pazza Inglese*, was the term,) you would have been more accomplished. You would have danced better — made artificial flowers—studied miracles—been more pious and obedient, and would have made no difficulty about a husband; nor would you have had the impudence to dare to tell me that a liberal and mathematician, an atheist—was charitable.”

“Madam, I did not know that atheism was a consequence of mathematics, geology, and liberal political principles.” “No?—Know it then, child: they are worse than atheism. A conscientious man, whose soul reposes in the bosom of the church; who follows its ordinances—who abstains on Fridays and Saturdays, and on the vigils of feasts—who confesses regularly, may doubt—may, sometimes, disbelieve!—It will shew the greater authority of the church, to bring him home within its blessed fold. But a liberal, and a geometrician, particularly if he affects charity without faith, is inevitably lost (*perduto*); for him there is, nor can be any salvation. Consult the Dominicans upon this head, and you will find their testimony conclusive.” She then called out

for the Ave Maria, and for her carriage, to go to the opera. I retired, to write to you these circumstances. You will now see how the matter is. The intended has ruined himself with my father by his politics. My father does not like the priests; but you know there has been a tacit treaty upon this head. My mother, who is as fond of the church as she is of the opera, has long since come to this agreement:—that when she is inclined to be serious, she retires to converse upon these subjects with her confessor, or the Marquis de Tranchant, a French emigrant. My father observes the terms of the treaty, in never allowing his favourite pursuits, natural history or political news, to be brought forward at places of common resort, such as dinner, supper, or the *prima sera*.* Pietro and the Abbatè, like two able diplomatists of rival or hostile powers, measure each other from head to foot, before they begin to speak;—their conversation is short, and upon the most insignificant topics. It was the blundering folly and empty violence of the *sposo* that brought on the battle, and thus provoked the war. My mother has naturally an excellent

* The early evening visits.

heart; and, when her acrimonious political feelings and dreadful prejudices do not interfere, a clear head; though she seldom agrees with my father, and he argued in the teeth of all her favourite opinions, yet, upon reflection, she will finish by taking his side;—and, I think, I thus perceive the loop-hole how I shall make my escape. In the mean time, my dear friend, believe me, that I shall strive to act with prudence.

Adieu, I embrace you,

CLORINDA.



ROSALINE TO CLORINDA.

Bath, November 16th.

I REJOICE, my dear friend, at your happy prospects, which I will not mar by comment or advice, as you will have received my second letter before this reaches you.

We have arrived here on our way to the borders of Wales, where my father's estate lies; in order that I should pay my respects to my ma-

ternal aunt Barbara ; and as she is a specimen of a fine lady of this country, I shall endeavour to describe her to you. I am sure that she has a good heart, from the affectionate cordiality with which she received us. After having embraced me kindly, she sat down in a musing attitude immediately before me. And then, having examined me most minutely, she shed some tears, which she did with great grace and effect—urging how much I put her in mind of her poor dear sister Eliza ; although it is well known that there was not the least likeness—and that I take after my father. When he ventured to differ, then it was my countenance, then my manner ; in short, it was altogether. She then ran on, upon the accomplishments of the young ladies of this country.—How many hours they were employed—the vast quantity of things they learned—the rage for modern education, that extended itself to the common people—what a civilized country this was become, and that soon vice and crime would be banished from among us by this wonderful progress in letters. She then enumerated the number of reading-rooms—public libraries—Bible societies—dancing academies—and saving banks.

She dwelt with pride upon the fact that patent medicines and gospel tracts were within every one's reach—that this encyclopedic education had entirely banished the antiquated notions of the Jesuits, who pretend that each individual has organs or a genius fitted to acquire some particular science, and that a vast number confound each other—and that the pursuit of one train of thoughts was the sufficient employment of life. On the contrary, my aunt gave in rather to Mr. Locke's opinion, that the mind was a piece of blank paper, on which any character might be traced; the consequence being that the science and genius lay in the pen and ink and the writer's hand, and not on the material, which was the paper,—the type of the human mind. Having exhausted her lore, which, to say the truth, lay rather in a narrow compass for apparently so universal a critic, she then fell upon herself—she declared that it was owing entirely to her own free choice that she had remained so long a widow—that the offers for her hand had been innumerable; but that the station which she held in society in London might be deranged, unless she married precisely in that society—and that,

having narrowed the range of her choice, she could not exactly find a match suitable; for, she added, My dear, I belong to a very exclusive society, and no advantages of birth, rank, or fortune, would induce me to marry out of that society.—She then insinuated, in a confidential manner, and in a low tone of voice, that she had been so fortunate as to unite two things generally considered as incompatible—great ease and prudence of manners, and great vivacity and yet purity of morals; that none of the men of her acquaintance dare address a double-entendre to her; and she concluded by telling me, that I could not be too circumspect in my conduct. All this was uttered with a volubility of tongue, which allowed of hardly a pause for the inflection of voice, in common-place words tolerably well arranged. I saw, at once, that Mrs. Barbara's forte was *dissertation*, and not argument; and that the copiousness of her discourse was more the habit of her mind than to comprise its effusions in a more fettered logic. I carefully abstained then from controverting or even doubting any of her propositions; on the contrary, I seemed a good deal astonished and delighted at the mazes that she had danced

through. This I expressed by a frequency of ready assents more by gesture than by words. She then started up, took my father by both hands, declared, without any previous illustration, that Sir Arthur was right, and that I was a wonderful creature, and had undoubtedly a very subtile genius, that caused me to understand at first setting off, so many things, which had occupied her so long a time to get acquainted with—my talents lay in my having been a patient and assenting listener. My father smiled at her simplicity; for your people of the great world, Clorinda, are often among the most simple, particularly those who frequent only a limited circle of acquaintances, and who generally inoculate each other with mutual ineptitude and folly. She then said, in an affected protecting tone, I think you will *take*, child; indeed, I should not bring you forward if I did not think that you would—because one must not commit oneself, and one is very apt to do that in bringing one's relations forward—because one is blinded from partiality—but I never commit myself, and I think you are very *présentable*, as the French say. Of course no one can object to your name—but that is nothing in comparison to my credit—and my

introduction—and then your own tone and manners—I hope you have tact, child, and good taste. Thus what is pompously called the great world, is the name that certain circles give to themselves, who are like the ostrich in the desert, when it hides its head under its wing, it conceives no one sees it—so those assuming this title, consider it to be universally acknowledged. The great world here I am not sufficiently yet acquainted with to define, nor have I ever had that problem satisfactorily solved; because it is neither birth, rank, talents or station, that constitute fashion; nor learning, nor even fine taste; it is, I think, from what I have heard and seen abroad, of our dearly beloved English fashionables, upon the whole, impudence—bustling, pushing pretensions, egregious vanity and great insolence, where it is allowed. Nothing can be so insipid, often, as their society, so paltry as their feuds, or so venomous, yet so absurd, or so contemptible as their exclusive pretensions; and were we to analyse those very pretensions, what would they amount to? Rank folly—the frog swelling himself to the size of the ox and bursting. The great world in Paris and at Florence are those who never lose sight of the

steeple of Notre Dame or of the Duomo. Indeed, when one has the misfortune to be out of sight of the one or the other, we cease to be in a civilized country. I have rather been in a gay humour to-day, because my dearest friend's letter has given me great satisfaction; and I think I foresee, that it is not so much the repulsive qualities of a certain person, as the attractive ones of the Roman Count R*** that has made her so uneasy. Tell me, Clorinda, if I am right. Still I must not always trifle, so recollect that we agreed to take higher flights in our letters, and shortly, you must expect a more severe one from me. Adieu, till then.

ROSALINE.

ROSALINE TO CLORINDA.

Bath, November 17th.

I AM more persuaded every day of what I have often urged to you ; that a woman, who feels she has the capacity, loses half her existence in not cultivating her mind, even in the highest flights that it can take. How much are our office and our duty mistaken ! My conviction is, that we have nothing to do with the detail of sciences. The practical sciences then belong exclusively to men : but, in common with them, our business lies in the knowledge of the source of all sciences, that of the human mind. Are not we their counsellors ? Are not we the executive officers of the domestic authority, the instructresses of children, the guides of their tender years ? And from whence is the authority of a free state ?—from the aggregate of domestic authority. But we are supposed to be ever under the influence of direct and blind authority. If we are ignorant slaves, those whom we are primarily to instruct will be ignorant slaves also. For the head directs the

hand—the master, the scholar. I say, therefore, that a woman's pursuits ought to be the highest flights of reason; and this can only be understood by her studying the full operation of the human mind. The details of sciences, such as chemistry, geology, are none of them within a woman's sphere. The connexion between the head and heart is what I presume to be their first object. In it is contained the loftiest flight of metaphysics, a word, which alarms the mass of mankind. Whereas man is a metaphysical animal; that is his distinctive characteristic. He lives equally in the sphere of metaphysics, as he does in that of nature; because all qualities are metaphysical. A woman's sphere is peculiarly in sentiment. Do not we hear a metaphysical lecture every Sunday? What is religion, God, immortality, virtue, vice, if they be not all in the sphere of metaphysics? Our capital error is that we attempt to teach truth through the medium of fable, because successive generations do not found their instruction upon the method of analysis, but upon the authority of former generations, hence we equally adopt their wisdom and their errors; that is, every thing is a fable, or told through the

medium of a fable. When first principles are once mathematically imparted to the human mind, then leave the heart to its play, then encourage sentiment and poetry and fiction: these are the flowers of the mind that adorn it. But I am a decided advocate, that the first years of a child's life should be passed in stern, dry instructions—it is a great art to teach truth—the greatest art. The ancient Persian youth were taught to ride, shoot with a bow, and *to tell truth*. The latter is the rub. *Aye, what is truth?* Women so taught will then arrive at the summit of justice, and form a counteracting power in families and in states, (because states are only the congregation of families,) to selfishness, ambition, and all the fiercer passions, which are repugnant to their sex, and to the happiness of mankind. The greatest pride of my life is to have been thus early instructed, to have exclusively studied the power of my own mind, and allowed it to take its natural drift, and I hold that it is easier to comprehend *truth* than *falsehood*; and the difficulty of our early education is, that we begin by teaching children *falsehood*, or fiction, which is repugnant to the beautiful purity of their youthful minds. Hence arises

our playing fast and loose, between contradictory principles ; for we can never expect duty and self-devotion, if there be the least doubt as to the rectitude of principles. The love of power, communicating itself on every side, warps justice, and blends together *truth* and *falsehood*. They have then to unlearn again what has been taught them—hence the confusion which envelops all our moral existence. My dearest friend, cultivate your *reason*, and then you will find the road to self-reverence—the safeguard of your own virtue and dignity—you will discover justice, which places you in a state of relationship with society. I need not recommend to you to frequent as much as possible your father's society, and to receive all the instruction that Pietro Perruvini can give, and I am sure I need not to urge you to be *civil* to Count R***, and assure him how much *I* regret the loss of his society—his lively wit—strong sense and extended benevolence, which shewed itself in the best tried manner towards his country, and in the kindest offices to all. I shall endeavour to make my lectures to you as little irksome as possible, but every degree of instruction is more or less so. My next will be written from the borders

of Wales, where my father, who wants some repose after the fatigue of his journey and the exhaustion of his spirits, is most anxious to arrive. I begin to see (and indeed I do not repine) that I shall soon have but the secondary place in your heart; until a similar one falls to my lot, you have the first place in mine. Adieu. I embrace you.

ROSALINE.



ROSALINE TO CLORINDA.

Bath, November 25th.

My father, my dear friend, is gone to his estate on the borders of Wales; and as it was conceived that neither the season of the year, nor the state of the house, was such as ladies could venture in, I remain here with my aunt, who is in a perpetual state of impatience for the arrival of Sir A. Atherstone.

Yesterday being Sunday, Mrs. Barbara proposed to me to go and hear a great preacher. She said,

she was ashamed to avow that he was not of the established church; that it was the first time in her life that she had been guilty of the infidelity of going to any other place of worship than that in which she had been born and reared; but that all-powerful fashion, or curiosity, or both, had so far got the better of her orthodoxy, that she was determined to squeeze. I answered, that I was perfectly willing; that I had often listened to all the great preachers in Italy, some of whom were very eloquent, but that the English had generally sneered at them, as most fanatical, superstitious, and extravagant; averring, that no person of sense could listen with pleasure to such absurdities, as what they uttered; that, moreover, I expected to be highly edified and interested, particularly as the preacher was not one of the established church; therefore a more recent edition of protestantism, no doubt amended, corrected and enlarged. And therefore, I should have the opportunity of observing the difference between the barbarous jargon of what I had been told was an Italian papistical fanatic, and a staid, rational, edifying, protestant dissenter. With much difficulty we entered into the church, or meeting house, or con-

venticle, (for I am not yet habituated to all the different designations of the places of worship in this country.) I was surprised to find that tickets of admission were necessary; but I thought this an excellent expedient to prevent compression, and it struck me, that the piety of my countrymen, from this circumstance, had not been overrated. At length a figure, something like the print of Don Quixote, ascended the pulpit; and, if he wanted the barber's dish on his head, the action of his arms gave him a great similarity to the knight of La Mancha's windmill. The pulpit might afford the resemblance to the mill and its occupant to the sails. His sermon was long—His manner vehement—His matter various—And, if confusion is a characteristic of the sublime, it was awful. His doctrines were not consoling, for he maintained, by the most perspicuous train of reasoning, that in proportion as a man was virtuous, in the same degree, he was in utter danger. He dwelt with peculiar severity upon the hopelessness of doom of such as had the self-conceit of self-holiness. Such as reputed excellent fathers and mothers of families—decent people who performed all their obligations to the world

with great exactness. But for those who were either occupied by, or admirers of the beauties of nature, they were in a state of utter reprobation. Good works, inasmuch as they put us in conceit with ourselves, were dangerous; nay, more, by a singular figure in rhetoric, he held that good works without faith were less than nothing. Like the Duke of Buckingham's famous criticism upon Dryden, when the actor said: "My wound is great because it is so small." The duke replied: "Then 'twould be greater were it none at all." So this preacher might wisely intend to cut and shuffle with himself: Thus, what is less than nothing, may be greater than something. He then went on: that by consulting the inward man, we became much more intimately acquainted with him than with the outward man, whom we viewed with our fallacious organs and senses—that the invisible was the most visible, and that the visible was invisible—that light was darkness, and darkness light, he declared was the very essence of religion: that the unregenerate could hope for no mercy; were his charities and benevolence co-extensive with mankind, they were but an insult, without special grace, and would subject him to be eternally

lost. He defined special grace as a sort of license, and significantly asked, if unlicensed hucksters and chapmen, and dealers and pedlars, were not punishable by the magistrates; so would the great Eternal Magistrate trounce all such ungraced, that is unlicensed, unregenerate traders in the word, those who felt not continually the workings of the inward spirit—the inward man struggling with the outward man, who was always led by the nose by the evil one. He described sometimes the flesh swallowing the spirit, and, at other times, the spirit swallowing up the flesh; and, by a most accurate calculation, it appeared, that not above one in a million could be saved. According to his inspection of the tables of salvation, which was as minute as the multiplication table; it behoved then his flock to struggle and sweat, and fight night and day with the old man; for whomsoever he touched in this world would be damned in the next, and not above one in a million escaped his grasp. He then informed us that we had lain under a mistake with regard to the lenity of the Deity; that he was a God of vengeance and of terrors, delighting in destruction and desolation; and very aptly quoted all the passages in the Old

Testament that bore upon this point. Lest his hearers should not be sufficiently impressed with awe, he proceeded minutely to enter into a description of the last day, or great assize, as he termed it. He made manifest the wonderful rapidity of the trials; millions would be judged in the thousandth part of a second. The preacher, carried away with his subject, then dashed us down into hell; his description was more minute than either Milton's or Dante's, though not so poetical. He dwelt frequently, and with great force, upon the pavement of hell, which he maintained was to be plates of iron, heated ten thousand times hotter than we are able to heat even iron red hot in this world; it glowed, he said, with a light red colour horrid to behold. In the midst was a large clock, which every hour *struck eternity*: it chimed every quarter of an hour, hopeless doom; and such benignant and consoling sentiments. He then described the level lake of brimstone. Here many persons uttered groans; some handkerchiefs were carried up to the eyes and noses: but when he told us of the tremendous smells, which were engendered from this lake, by an association of ideas, according to Locke's doc-

trines, many delicate ladies, after having in vain applied to salts and smelling bottles, screamed and fainted; and I am assured some were affected with a nausea at the stomach. The preacher's ready eye seizing the incident, turned it with great effect to his argument, and declared, that all persons in hell were subject to perpetual sea sickness. Upon this, many ladies from the sister country, and others, who had lately visited the continent, and who had returned in the steam-packet, were observed to weep bitterly. In this guise, and with wonderful gesture and force of lungs, he continued for one hour and forty minutes: but what was most singular, was, that the greater part of his audience appeared more stunned than convinced, and after the first effects were over, could not help smiling at each other, as they were returning home. Indeed, his oration had this effect: when a child places itself behind a door, and cries out, Bo! as a nervous lady enters, she makes a little exclamation, puts her hands to her sides, and then smiles, and takes up the child and kisses it; with this difference—that I found no lady inclined to salute the preacher; for, from the mere force of imagination, they fancied that he was his cloven

footed majesty in disguise. Not content with preaching, I hear this great divine has given several treatises to the world, all wonderful, and possibly very edifying to those who can comprehend them. Among them is a small tract (for our author dwells with rapture rather on the terrors of hell-fire, than the joys of paradise,) intitled: “A new and approved Method of catching Flies with Treacle, or a taste of Paradise by a liquorish Christian.” But his great work is upon shadows and moonshine: wherein he proves to conviction, that what is, is not; and what is not, is; and a variety of other curious and profound metaphysical discoveries, which are deduced by the clearest train of logical reasoning; and which places our preacher and author among the most eminent of the day, and entitles him alike to the high consideration of the quality, and the admiration of the vulgar: but had he been born in Tuscany, and mounted the pulpit there with a long beard, a coarse brown habit and cord tied round his loins, he would long since have been preferred from a cell in the Capuchins, to a cell in St. Bonafacio—a certain receptacle near the Bologna gates, where he might have met with a kindred congregation.

I sum up his character in this short sentence : he is the grotesque champion of figurative horrors.

I fear, my dear Clorinda, that I must have wearied your patience upon the subject, but I am determined to be fair ; and when I hear my dear countrymen and countrywomen calling out that all is superstition, and fanaticism, and absurdity on the continent, I cannot help asking them to look at home.

After this exposition of some of the reformed doctrines, you will ask, why should you, Rosaline, object to the church of Rome? I object to it merely on one point. It is not the pope's infallibility, which amounts to, without what I shall tell you, to power without contact, which is the same as no power at all. It is not your ritual and ceremonies, which I admire more than those of the protestants. It is not your dogmas, which are the same essentially. It is a part of your discipline, nay, one main point of your discipline. It is the confessional ; the most artful and tremendous engine of power ever invented by man ; the greatest lever of the human mind that was ever conceived : this is the corner stone of the whole fabric—this is the key to the whole building ; this locks up the human mind in dogmas and in disci-

pline: without this the pope's and the church's authority would be the same as the authority of other churches, and other popes, that is, protestant kings; but, with this power, authority is not without contact, and it brings it into contact with the most secret feelings of a man's heart, those which are locked up from his wife, his family and his friends; it is the counteracting power to all other powers; no other power can stand an instant in competition with it. In this lies the sting. Take away the confessional, and the catholic religion is but a splendid ceremonial without political power, and with not more spiritual power than the church of England. Other ceremonials delight and feast the senses; dogmas may or may not influence the mind; but the confessional enters the heart by force and takes it by storm, lays man's will prostrate, seizes upon and modifies his whole being. Clarinda, beware, you will find it stronger than *your confession to me, your friend, or to your lover*, when you have one. And this is sufficiently a reason why I should, being thus ousted; why, I say, I should dislike being second to your confessor, and to confess myself to you in this frank manner. Adieu,

ROSALINE.

ROSALINE TO CLORINDA.

Bath, December 1st.

YOU will have received my last mad letter. But I was in a vein of pleasantry; and as I detest quacks and mountebanks, when they aim at being mischievous, I think it right to expose them. Methinks I see but two classes of human beings; those that may be compared to spiders and flies. The former are ever spreading their webs, to catch and devour the latter, and it is the fate of our sex to play alternately the spider and the fly. Which of the two, it is now the object of my aunt Bab to imitate, I shall leave you to guess. Sir Arthur has been with us five days; and although he passes in the world as an highly accomplished agreeable man, I confess he appears tame and ordinary enough to me. His understanding is of that middle size, which is sure (if it takes a grave turn) to have discretion enough to hide its vacuity, by stuffing a great deal of common-place knowledge in his head. An easy flow of conversation, which is obtained by a certain degree of coolness

of temper, and much habit of the world, and a pleasant turn upon small occurrences, pass, if not for wit, at least for humour, with most people. His knowledge is sufficiently diversified to prevent him from prosing; and his wit not poignant enough to make him dreaded.—He steers just a little a-head of the convoy that he sails with, knowing well rather than distrusting his own power. In great concerns, he affects moderation—he is a moderate friend of liberty, a moderate reformer, a moderate friend of social order, moderately attached to party, moderately attached to Church and State, and, Mrs. Barbara thinks, moderately convinced of her charms; but certainly not moderately selfish. These cold coxcombs are most provoking. The solemnity of their air, the stiffness of their gait, are but scanty cloaks to hide their emptiness; they pass current in the world for discreet, decorous persons; they affect taste, because they are too timid to commit themselves; they sneer, but they cannot bear to be sneered at in return, because their absolute selfishness makes them very sensitive; that is, they are sensitive when they themselves are concerned, and cold and repulsing when others are.

He certainly has a good taste in the fine arts, has studied them well abroad, and pursues them here. He is made up of negatives ; so that I doubt he will be long before he decides upon so positive an act as to take a wife. He would, however, like the reputation of gallantry, without the risk and trouble ; and he is fonder of avowing that inclination, than striving to gratify it. Consequently, his letters are bolder than his verbal declarations ; his pen more energetic than his tongue. But I doubt not, Clorinda, that women in general prefer supplicating words, even hesitatingly and somewhat awkwardly expressed, to the mere cold formality of an epistle, even with all its prettiness of style, its balanced sentences, and its quaint conceits. It is a haughty and happy moment for a woman to see the proud lord of the creation, sometimes the tyrant of her sex, abashed and sighing, and confused before her. One of those precious moments in her existence, which gives her the flush of the conqueror's triumph, tempered with the luxury of yielding clemency : for ordinary lovers cannot write with the energy of Rousseau, but the most burning words on paper have not the inflammable qualities of

burning words poured through fervent lips, from the furnace of an impassioned heart. The reserved and cautious medium of letters destroys the animation—the play of the soul. No, Clorinda, whenever the fates shall bring you to the goal, insist upon the personal encounter and triumph. Believe me, it will long be remembered, and so much longer will your gentle chains be worn. It is a moment that stamps our authority on the mind of him who tremulously receives his doom. In characters not soon forgotten, what spectacle is more delightful than to see the subdued haughtiness of those who conceived themselves our conquerors, confused, trembling, hesitating—startled alternately with joy and alarm,—waiting to hear their sentence? This is the height of exquisite power,—the power to command those who direct the storm of battle, the eloquence of the senate, or the inspiration of poetry,—to be other Helens that fire other Troys. What constitutes the delight of our life?—sensations present, in retrospect, and in anticipation. Our highest existence is to live in the sphere of refined sensations; that is, *sentiment* purified by fine taste, (such being our habitual condition,) the hurricane of the passions,

let them blow with ever so much violence, can never degrade our being. Our rage becomes then as sacred and refined, as if depicted in a Greek tragedy. It is the exaltation of our being that the ancients strove after. It is this refinement of our nature that chivalry sought to accomplish. Its seeds are in pure friendship, the nursery of dignified love. Believe me, Clorinda, we may have parents, and brothers, and sisters; but have we friends? We may have lovers and husbands, but are they friends? Men may have mistresses and wives, but are they always friends? Friendship, then, to use a philosophical phrase, carried to the absolute,—that is, abstract friendship, is the highest state of attraction between two individuals; it is the closest affinity; it is the most harmonious sympathy, whose laws all lie hid in the darkest recesses of nature,—unsearchable, and hitherto unsearched, when conjoined with the consanguinity of relatives, or the warmer extasies of love, need we go farther in search of paradise? Hope then comes in, and whispers to us, though this will not, cannot last. She, an enchantress, will transport us into aerial regions. But still a dark cloud here overshadows me.

Clorinda, your absence causes these sentiments to rise in my bosom, for the highest effect that I have yet felt of the power of attraction, has been towards you. But I know not why I have ever dark forebodings of the future, which clouds my rising joy; a mist ever sits on my mind's eye, for it gazes on darkness and uncertainty. I am soothed by retrospects—disconcerted by present sensations—and bewildered by future prospects. My bosom *is not full then!* May it not be too full! You know how often you have chid me for my melancholy anticipations. Yet this is the proof that my being is eminently sensitive. Obdurate beings go reckless on through life, and never feel by anticipation. When ill comes upon them, they are indeed cast down; but sensitive beings live out of the time present, which is ever more selfish; by reflections on the time past, and anticipations upon the time future. I am never positive, as some are, upon the time future. I never say, I will do this, or, I will do that; but I hope for this, and I trust such will be my destiny. In time past, then, we live on reflection; in time present, on sensation, whether of joy or of grief; in time future, on hope. The time

present is selfish; the time past, interesting; the time to come, sublime! And is not this a compensation? It may, or it may not be one:—if such condition heightens pleasure, it renders pain intolerable. It may place our hearts upon the rack until they burst. Oh! let me banish the frightful idea! Why should it have found a way into my brain? Is it the dark forebodings of the future? Do the Fates like thus to play with us—to keep us ever on the stretch—to make us run to the length of our tether? But thou, all-powerful goddess of nature, that hast thus formed me in one of thy tender and mystical moods, whisper to the hard-hearted Fates not to make me too much their sport. Are they not already glutted with their many victims?

But enough. I will not communicate my melancholy to you. Adieu. I ever embrace you.

ROSALINE.

CLORINDA TO ROSALINE.

Florence, November 15th.

“WE are led by an invisible hand.” This, sybil, is one of your oracles. “Fate propels the storm, we are dashed against our doom as the white spray splashes the black rocks.” Such are ever your wise sayings. But I will lay open my heart to you. Hitherto I have been agitated by two emotions: grief at our separation, and sorrow at my impending destiny. A third emotion has succeeded, which softens the first, and affords a compensation for the latter—a consolation for the future. I can no longer conceal it from you, though I blush to avow it. Rinaldo has caused the third tumult. My mother spoke seriously to my father upon his having placed about me Pietro Perruvini, as a sort of tutor. He (good man!) conscious of having somewhat violated the exact rules of politeness, by the storm, which I described to you, was anxious to repair his fault. For, with all her haughtiness, my mother can wheedle. The Abbate’s dark malignity and insatiable revenge, the true characteristics of his corps, sought only

to destroy a rival; a most dreaded one. Pietro was formally accused of scepticism, because he displeased a confessor. The scandal of the affair, from the ready and active tongued Florentines, was getting abroad. To preserve domestic peace, my father yielded; Pietro is gone to inspect some manuscripts in the Bolognese Library; and I am allowed to be accompanied in my botanical and philosophical studies — by whom? Rinaldo di Rocca Saint Cacciano. So, an old philosopher of sixty is substituted by a young man of thirty. You will exclaim, here is an Abelard and an Eloïse. Look at the double management of my mother and the priest. This beggarly Roman count, who is an exile for his political opinions, and consequently under the eyes of the police, say they, can do us no harm; the protection of our house is all that he seeks after; he never can pretend to Clorinda's hand; besides, the girl has the same national feeling that we have. He is a stranger; his estates are under sequestration; he has not the ability of Pietro; she will soon grow tired of him, and then our scheme will succeed; besides, if we observe the slightest partiality, we can alarm her father's prejudices and pride.—But, Rosaline, “we are led by an invisible hand,” and it remains to be proved.

How will this end? My father I never will deceive, because he is all openness, all generosity. My mother shall be requited with the same confidence that she reposes in me. It is in families as in states; allegiance and protection are reciprocal in the latter; in the former, confidence and obedience. Because the parent that places confidence in the child will never insist upon force, because the previous confidence supposes consultation rather than injunction. You see you have taught me to argue. How infectious are the uses of our wits! no wonder the despots desire them to be benumbed. Have not I opened my heart to you, with all its emotions? Oh strive to guide them. Again and again I embrace you.

COLORINDA.

ROSALINE TO CLORINDA.

Bath, December 5th.

You have often asked me how I have acquired the knowledge of those things that you seem so much to covet; and how short my life has been to arrive at the conclusions that I am very ready to make. You may accuse me of having as ready and minute a pen as *Clarissa Harlowe*; minute it may be; but the natural impetuosity of my character will never allow me to be so prolix. I cannot spin out such an intricate web. On the contrary, not embarrassed with formalism, untutored in the dull and trifling ways of modern education, I have used my wits to discover truth, which, in general, lies buried under the lifeless mass of authority. One fool makes many, is a common sentiment; one bad precedent descends, passes current, and is sealed with the admiration of a succession of fools. These are the prejudices in which we are educated, until we consider it almost impious not to believe in ghosts. To be wise, then, is to unlearn what we have learnt. Others educate us in falsehood; we educate ourselves in truth, because others warp us to their own pur-

pose: every one, giving his own selfishness a certain play, wishes to cast his neighbour in that mould. I have had the blessing bestowed upon me by divine nature to see things without a mist. Well, then, truth is naked. Such then as she is have I discovered her. There is a pedantic word called analysis, which has ever been uppermost in my mind. Aye! let us analyse; that is, let us dissolve every thing thoroughly, and then we see what its component parts are made of. This puts us behind the scenes; we are then let into the secret of the puppetshow of human life. What a puppetshow it is! What a farce often, if we know how to use it; it is certainly amusing. For there is delight from the palace down to the cottage; aye, and sentiment too. Irony and sentiment possess my breast by turns. Why? Because I perpetually analyse; because I see deformities and harmony. You say I am melancholy, because harmony has over me the greater influence. It tempers the soul; then she becomes tender; then she is melancholy. The poet says:

“Melancholy, silent maid, with leaden eye
That loves the ground.”

To play between these two inclinations, to be the

pendulum that oscillates between them, is no bad lot of human existence; it places us out of its petty concerns, for petty passions reach us not, and when we view them we hand them over to irony; great and noble passions we grapple to our soul. But where is positive Religion? Is she not sentiment in disguise, fear in disguise, and love of ourselves in disguise; love of others through love of ourselves, and to promote ourselves? Where then lies the centre of our existence? Lieth it in God, or our own breast? Ah! now, Clorinda, I am coming to the point. Where is God, if he lieth not in our breast? For he is not out of the universe, and the universe exists in our breast. Call it mind, heart, pure reason, intelligence, feeling, I care not, they are all within us. Do we see things in ourselves or in themselves? Does the eye receive impressions, or does it throw out a searching glance? No; it is the brain then that is the dissolving crucible that smelts these impressions. *Man then is the centre of his own existence!* Then he is the centre of the universe! For the universe has the non-dimensions of infinitude. No measurement can span it. It has neither depth, nor altitude; nor right, nor left; nor high, nor low; nor east, nor west; nor space,

nor time; and still more awful yet, nor cause nor effect. Then it stands naked and alone, *the vital principle absolute!* whirled about with eternal rapidity, and wrought round with a material form, unconscious of stay or stop, quashing alike creation and destruction absolute; for it is our ideas that have created the notion of creation, from the experience of reproduction. But where do we find these things in our own minds? They then are the centre of our own existence—the centre of all existence. Clorinda, these notions, overturning previous form, may instantaneously cause a sweeping desolation in your mind. But persist. Consider only as existence, what exists in it, and you will find your heart filled again to the brim; for it will drink as deep as it has capacity to hold, so full that there will neither be room for fear, nor malignity, nor spite, nor envy. These few words have cost me years of labour to acquire. It was long before they would fit into my mind, before my soul was daring enough to embrace them; but being there and convinced of the truth of them, shall they not flow into yours? I care not how they are scrutinized, sifted and examined. The Goddess of truth, that I invoke, tells me that they are just; and she has given me a spell which

defies all incantations. The essence then of truth is the first born offspring of pure reason; it is alone generated in the unbiassed unfettered human mind; in that mind, that stands as single and as much alone on the vital principle absolute, round which are wrapt every form and object that we see or conceive. I shall now give you my golden key. You may unlock every other science, for they are secondary objects. I would not obscure this real transparency of nature by tedious explanations. To them who choose to remain in darkness, let us not gratuitously force light upon them. And I have said enough to give to your rational mind an insight into its own being; this having been the purport of this letter, let it for a moment fix your attention.

Again I embrace you.

ROSALINE.

ROSALINE TO CLORINDA.

Bath, December 7th.

WE make great mistakes, my dear friend, when we assert, that the existence of things rests upon a variety of principles ;—I see but one, which I must explain. I call it the vital principle absolute :—that is to say, universal, or the vital principle of itself and by itself. We talk of the theory of motion, of the laws of motion, of causes, effects, time, and space. Let us begin by giving them all a negative existence—a flat denial :—and look then only at the vital principle. We shall discover then, that motion is one of its qualities, in fact its essence ;—thus I am an advocate for the doctrine of universal impulse. And we see then, after a careful analysis, that all subordinate parts of it, such as we call the laws of nature, the powers of the human mind, and the moral law, are only different signs of the movement of the vital principle absolute ; shades of it, if I may so speak, just like the various colours of the rainbow ; indeed I like the simile :—the rainbow is an arch, so we may figuratively assert the vital principle to be ; because all movement is in a

circle; the highest exemplification being on the solar system, then the circle of movement diminishes to the most minute or insignificant existence. When I hear persons talk either of spiritualism or materialism absolute, I blush for their ignorance; how little they have condescended to analyse, or to think profoundly, because the universal vital principle will unlock every secret of existence, as clearly as branches of them are unlocked and measured, and explained, by the exact sciences. Our knowledge of this principle is in ourselves; therefore, I have said, that we are the centre of our own existence:—but you will say, that this is metaphysical. I cannot explain it to you in plainer terms; and I think one simple principle to be easier to comprehend than a variety of contradictory ones. The laws of nature are only the vital principle, assuming a variety of shapes, which our minds class, and call laws—call harmony and discord; this simple principle, circling, creeping, imperceptibly growing, whirling with extreme rapidity; oscillating, transforming, assuming new and yet the same appearances; disappearing, shifting, and re-appearing; here identical, there diverse; now attracting, now repelling, now sympathetic, now

antipathetic ; exhausting, by its constant immutable motion, its outward and visible forms ; then re-appearing in other forms, as in life and death. This, I say, Clorinda, is my principle of philosophy ; it lies in a small compass, but it has cost a large portion of thought to arrive at this. May not the famous Malbranche have had this notion, when he says, that we see all things in God ? And may not this have been St. Paul's notion, when he says, " In him we live and move, and have our being " ? This proves the famous proposition, *that we view all things in ourselves and not in themselves*, because we are the receptacle of all outward impressions. Our sensations are the receptacle of substances, and our ideas of qualities. All qualities are therefore ideal, that is, they are adjuncts to substances, and are demonstrated by substances ; virtue, vice, cause, effect, substance, accident, God, immortality, soul, therefore, are qualities, or rather principles received in our ideas. And when Malbranche saw all things in God, he saw all things in his own breast, filling that breast with power absolute, which he personified and deified ; thus he discovered the essence of the universe. May not these two philosophers have only intended to

explain the vital principle absolute, that is, universal and positive? So that all philosophical disputes seem to have been mere grammatical ones; the distinction between the pronoun *him*, and the particle *it*. You know that I am an absolute and blind fatalist. This entirely arises from my having considered all *things*, that is substance, as subject to the eternal vitality and movement of the universe. Individuals, beings, and things, have a certain degree of play; but the movement of the whole constitutes an irresistible necessity. We have all a self-moving power in our own hearts—but the self-moving power of others directs and decides that of ourselves. Hence a destiny. What an awful state we are in! liable each instant to be dashed out of existence; and worse, to lose our honour—our virtue—our character, to be the sport of fortune; sacrificed for what we conceive to be our duty, and the highest efforts of good. In short; whence, or how, can we escape from our fetters? By death alone! terrible alternative!—and yet it is the only one; for whilst we have life we are fettered, because we are encumbered with a sensitive substance—flesh, bones, and blood—that is subject to the laws of motion; to cause

and effect. In fact, human life is a substance and accident. Shew me a single instance to the contrary. Were we not fettered should we ever die? Would we choose any ill to fall upon us? What drivelling ideot, then, shall assert that our substance is free, though the mind is? Let us take our own lives, or the lives of any of our acquaintances; and let us examine if they have turned out according to our own wishes or theirs. Either there is certainty or not. Aye, indeed there is a certainty, but hid from our short and feeble sight; until the moment that it strikes us, sometimes with delight but oftener with pain. But still there is a distinction between moral movement and physical. That is, the first is the subjective movement; the second, the objective movement: the one declares the other. Just as every thing has two forms—the internal or intelligent forms; or its material and substantial forms. Let us strive to keep our minds as free as possible from the pressure of external circumstances. That alone is wisdom—that alone leads to happiness. Not that I am so cynical as not to admit that there is much happiness in success,—that success is what we desire,—and that hope connects us with the idea of success. But then, what anguish more

terrible than hope deferred! Am I the happier for indulging in these ideas? Health, contentment, and friendship, are the three greatest attributes of happiness. But can I avoid thinking? Alas! that is without my power: the tremulous anxiety of a sensitive being is as necessary a condition to the existence of such a being, as thoughtless stupidity is to an insensible one. This brings me to a part, at which I should like to explain myself. There is, evidently, an apparent contradiction in our being, which, with all our cunning, we cannot comprehend: and therefore I say, that we oscillate like the pendulum of a clock, in every particular of life. Now, when we view the mechanical laws of nature and a fraction of the universe, we see no other moving principle but these mechanical laws and that universe. Our mind is, as it were, a receptacle in which outward objects are reflected, and we see no other than mere existence—than the outward appearances of things. Viewing things in this light we say that the directing power is *It*, that is, the vital principle in itself; that which demonstrates itself in all outward appearances. Then we make God the universe; and the universe, God. But then we fly into mere idealism: there we find hope. That

idea carried to the absolute, constitutes immortality. Here we find God, that is, absolute cause; our thoughts, wandering far and near, seemed to be restrained by no power. Here we find free will. Then we arrive at the idea of moral laws—moral duties—final causes and original intention. Thus our being, like the pendulum of a clock, oscillates between realism and idealism. Fatalist then am I, as to all that relates to positive existence;—free then am I with regard to what relates to idealism.* In this idealism is not intelligence contained? This then constitutes our double existence,—our positive and our ideal being; that within ourselves, that is, within our sensations, and that without ourselves, that is, in our pure intelligence. Hence free will, co-existing with necessity;—hence co-existing mortality and immortality;—hence bounded views, and boundless ideas. I have said we know not what spiritualism is; we know not what materialism is. We see spirit wrapt up in matter, for vegetables have a vital principle: so has the earth. What

* In Idealism we reject the particle *It*, and transform it into the pronoun *Him*. Thus when we *think*, we say *God*—when *we look about*, we perceive the immediate or secondary cause, then we say *nature*. *God* alone exists in the sphere of idealism and not of realism—*nature* in realism.

keeps it together else? What keeps it alive? What constitutes the seasons, and its reproductive faculties? Its centre is not bigger than a pin's head; and yet on that small centre it turns. Who can describe motion but by its effects? We feel the effects of a sun-beam, and we hear the wind whistle; but we cannot see motion absolute, substance moved—that we can discover. Will our senses give us cognizance, then, of the vital principle absolute? No. But of its effects it will. Because we have cognizance of ourselves, will our senses give us cognizance of God? No. But of his works. For He, no more than the vital principle, can ever come into space or time. Therefore, space and time, cause and effect, all are cognizable positively by our senses; our pure intelligence, is in pure idealism. There we find God, or the vital principle absolute. What is hope? It is the anticipation of future good, from the experience of past. When this principle mounts up into pure idealism, it becomes immortality. For hope caried to the absolute can never die; that is, it escapes from time and space, cause and effect. In space and time, then, we are subject to cause and effect. Then we are bound in fate. But in idealism, we are out of space and time;

unbound by cause and effect; which must exist in space and time: consequently, unbound by fate. Idealism, which is the region of pure intelligence, has no beginning, no middle, no end. We cannot call it an unknown region, because it absorbs our highest sphere of existence. But how few will take the pains to separate it from our real existence! Thus, when it is asserted that there are no innate ideas, or innate first principles, an absurdity is asserted. What is an idea, if it be not innate? An idea is the cognizance of a quality of what is out of time and space, and can never come into time and space. Locke asserts, that all principles are taught. *Who, then, taught the first man?* Then he puts principles, moral laws, qualities, into time and space; because, to teach is to act, and to act is to consume time and occupy space. Who first taught moral laws? God—Immortality. As, if they be not innate, that is, pure ideas, then they must have been taught, and some one must have taught one man before another, and so on in succession. Locke, indeed, is not a deep metaphysician. He conducts an argument with dexterity, but that is all. He confuses all elements, and he knew nothing of handling time and

space.* God, moral laws, immortality, are all *innate principles*, which could never have been taught, for they never could have come into time and space. They exist in our *ideas*. Consequently they are innate existences. Not so, objects which strike the senses. Hence our existence is divided between idealism and realism; free in the first, fettered in the second. Ideas have nothing in common with our sensations, being conclusions of pure intelligence. How few will venture to sport in it! Take care, Clorinda, not to confound idealism with imagination. They have no reference to each other. Imagination

* Note by the Editor.—Locke may be said to be a shallow metaphysician; he has not gone into the depths of the human mind. Kant divides the intellectual world into four quarters: the materialists;—the spiritualists;—the idealists;—and the sceptics. They have all their share in it; and, to a certain extent, all are right. But Locke establishes his system upon the materialists. He then finds the want of a first principle, and jumps to that principle without connecting it with the other parts. Locke embraces a vast variety of subjects; but he treats them all superficially. It seems to be a law of nature, that deep penetrating minds seldom take so comprehensive a scope, and *vice versá*. Our heroine, having been the pupil of Pietro Perruvino, a mathematician, who was probably a Spinosist, immediately establishes a mixed system of realism and idealism; which, without going so far as Kant, is at once simple and easy of comprehension, and which any young person of talent could acquire.

is the reflection of outward images on our sensations, and the exquisite or painful thrill of those sensations, accordingly as they are susceptible of being excited. But in idealism there is no figure, no form, no passion, no reference to space or time, no affinity to cause or effect, no substance, no accident. It is the symbol of eternity. Here alone we find pure intelligence; for here alone are we free! The great professor Kant defines God to be *absolute concurrence*. His words are : “Reason forms the idea of God, or of a supreme intelligence out of nature, by connecting action and reaction into infinite or absolute concurrence.”

Have I not spoken clearly enough? Has not my pen been free enough? Have I not boldly disregarded precedents? Such alone is the mode of making acquaintance with our pure intelligence. Whilst others dose, Clorinda, awake.

Your's,

ROSALINE.



MRS. BELMONT TO MAJOR DE VERE.

Bath, December 8th.

My Dear Brother,

I HAVE made a sort of acquaintance, if so it may be called, with your daughter, and I have much to say in her praise. But her pursuits, her opinions, and her ideas on most subjects are so different from mine, and from those that we meet with usually in the world, that I cannot say that I have made much progress. Her manner is very good. She passes with great ease and effect from "grave to gay, from lively to severe." She has an excellent memory, though I could have wished her to have been better read in the poets, and in French literature, which latter, she says, is pedantic and formal, and meagre, and which she cannot abide. She holds, that the French shine only in the exact sciences, and where great precision and exactitude are necessary, and in the lively picture of ordinary occurrences; such as memoir writing, and comedies and farces—that their tragedies are bombastic, forced, and insipid—that they cannot draw deep from nature, because

they have neither true dignity, nor true taste—that they are, in fact, a nation of comedians—that they caricature life—that they understand an exact system of police—a cheating system of diplomacy—the art of destroying the human race by war, or exhausting labour by taxation. But that they have no conception of man in an elevated and dignified state. And that under every modification of government, they must be essentially slaves; for they have rather irregular notions of wild honour, than profound ones of justice; and they have more vanity than pride. Such is her criticism upon my dearly beloved French—upon that people that I have lived with so much, whose amusements in the capital of what I think of true taste, Paris, I have so largely participated in. Why is it that all those who have lived so much in Italy, come away so much prejudiced against every thing French? I asked her. Rosaline, who must give a reason for every thing, answered, “Because the root of the civilization of England is to be found in Italy.” This is one of her short oracular phrases, which often she does not condescend to explain; and then relapses into her state of meditation, reclining gracefully on the back of her chair, her head a little inclined on

one side, and the fore finger of her right hand touching her lip. No Grecian statue was ever more perfect than Rosaline. The extreme dignity and modesty of her deportment is such, that with the most exquisite shape imaginable, she is always enveloped in a shawl. Her usual reclining posture, her hazy, melancholy, interesting eye; the graceful movement of the action of her arms in speaking carries one back to Athens in the days of Aspasia, the favourite of Pericles. I am told that her language is strong and energetic in writing; but this is the effect of her deep thinking. In speaking, her language is beautiful and nervous, but perfectly within the sphere of a woman. The clear and silver tones of her voice ravish every ear. When she is ironical, which she can be, and most severely, too, she speaks extremely quietly, and begins rather in what the French call a *niais* (simple) manner; and then goes on with an even, quiet, low tone of voice, describing things and persons minutely, but with so beautiful a shade of ridicule, as to be intensely cutting. When she is more warm, she is always in better humour. When she dislikes her society, she is then very cool, very civil, and powerfully descriptive, and in such a manner, that

those, against whom this is aimed, feel it to the quick, but cannot call it in question. Such is her skill and dexterity. When, on the contrary, she is more vehement, it is as sure a sign she takes an interest in those whom she addresses, and strives to convince them. She is very tender, for tears come readily into her eyes upon the mentioning, with force, any great, generous or heroic action, or of indignation at any act of baseness or tyranny. And here again is a point of separation between us, for I am much inclined to be an ultra, for I love peace and quiet, and social order, and there is no tyranny in keeping things quiet. What are prisons and halters made for, but to keep people quiet? Whereas, Rosaline takes fire, like a piece of touchwood, at the bare statement of any thing like oppression; she will not hear of it. I have seen her restrain herself to pain,—her breasts heaving—her visage pale—her nostrils distended, and drawing her breath quite loud. Yet I must say, that this is only occasional. She is a most sweet feminine creature, with the prettiest easy manners, and kindest look imaginable, upon all ordinary occasions; but a volcano, if you work upon her feelings. The men (who are the best judges) admire her exceedingly,

and say, that she has every requisite of a woman. If she could find her equal among men, I am sure she would create a passion, such as we read of in story. But, alas! we have no Greek tragedians now to celebrate such passions as she would be equal to. I am sorry, my dear brother, that you did not send her over to me six years ago. I should have got rid of those philosophical and eccentric notions that she has received from her preceptor—an old Florentine mathematician; and she would have been more accomplished; but we must strive to make the most of her. Unfortunately, she has a will of her own, and it will not be easy to make her marry those whom we may conceive to be suitable. What a provoking thing this is! I never had another idea, when I was a girl, but that of making a good match, and though it lasted but a little while, still I have one good thing left, that is, a jointure of three thousand pounds a year, which gives me many friends, and many admirers; but I fear that we shall not get this odd girl into any such scheme, even for three times that sum. Besides, she is a dreadful fatalist, which makes her very indifferent about herself. It is a great pity such a fine creature is not more marketable; we might add greatly to

the importance of our family connections; and riches and honour are every thing in this life. And this is the secret why I always like to stick to power. In London, it is the court. Here, I like to be well with the master of the ceremonies. If, in the country, I inquire who is the Lord Lieutenant, or the ministerial member for the county? Or, if the members are opposition, who are the ministerial candidates? I always say, that every thing is flourishing; and nonsense, when people talk of distress. I confess I should rather like to have the commanding officer of the next regiment quartered near me, frequently to dinner, though old, ugly, and tiresome, than any of the young handsome captains, though the latter might call in a morning. I tell you all this, because you have been so long out of England, that you are not aware of the right road to preferment. My dear brother, lay it down as a rule, those in authority can do no wrong. That is the maxim of the constitution, with respect to the King. You will find it run through the whole. A Bishop is more worthy than a Dean; a Dean, than a Rector. As for a poor Curate, you may make him a scape-goat, or throw him overboard. A judge must always be supported, right

or wrong; though it may be convenient for country justices to be sometimes sacrificed, but not stipendiary magistrates, because they hold more to the government. My friends tell me this; particularly my cousin Chivers, who has lately purchased two boroughs. When you write to Rosaline, put these sentiments into your own words, and urge them to her. Let us fashion her. Bring her next spring to London, and we may do great things with her. You have an immense influence with her. She never mentions you but with a respect and love quite striking; and it is a pity such a fine creature should be lost for mere whims. Indeed, if we can keep ourselves from being abused in the newspapers, and no glaring fact be brought against us by our friends, and that we can be always depended upon by those in power—to run through thick and thin for them; what does every thing else signify? I fear I have wearied your attention; but observe my request.

Most affectionately your's,

BARBARA.

MAJOR DE VERE TO MRS. BELMONT.

December 12th.

My Dear Sister Barbara,

I HAVE received your long letter, and I confess I do not think that you do justice in it, either to me or to Rosaline. What would you have of her?—education? Education is the jargon and song of the day; as if methods were every thing. All officers and soldiers are drilled alike; but it is the inborn qualities of some that make them shine above their comrades. The greatest men that history has ever produced have been either self-educated, or have soon got out of the hands of their masters, which has come to the same thing as self-education. But you, sister, think that every one must think alike, and be perpetually worshipping some sort of authority or other; and, when you can carry tyranny no farther in public matters, invent forms and conventions of society to entrap women and triflers in; this I remember to have been the case in France before the Revolution—"Is such a person of the society?" was always asked, as if there were but

one exclusive society on the face of the earth. Then again: "One does not think so;" "One does not say so;" "An honest man was a polite man." What, I ask, Barbara, would you have of Rosaline? For a person to have opinions different from those whom we frequent is absurd, if we cannot support them; but, when the arguments upon which we sustain our opinions are incontrovertible, then we have a right to hold what opinions we can maintain. Is not truth the pretended object of man? What is the test of truth? To know how to discover it and to sustain it. Well, then, no opinion can be erroneous that is founded in truth; if the contrary, falsehood is the grand aim of mankind. That falsehood may be more convenient than truth no one will doubt; because, by it, we can cheat others to our own advantage, and it is a main road to preferment in the world; and this is owing to the falsehood of our early education—familiarily teaching us truth by means of fiction. You mention your cousin Chivers. He, indeed, is a practical illustration of my argument; bred a lawyer, accustomed therefore to make falsehood appear truth, and truth falsehood. This has tainted every proceeding of his life; he has made money by lottery tickets, by

slices of loans by advising cunningly in matters of government contracts; by dabbling in the funds; from picking up news about the public offices, paying court to the tenth clerk or even door-keeper. Then he buys two rotten boroughs; two rotten boroughs! Indeed the grave of the constitution. What is this but a practical positive lie, in law, on the constitution? To buy the representation of the people—then to call it the real representation! Is not this to substitute falsehood for truth, and to make a contemptible and audacious farce of government, or the constitution? And so, according as our institutions, and plans of education, and as all laws now stand, we are called upon and punished if we do not support falsehood instead of truth. And how, and with what justice can a revenue officer be punished for allowing smuggling, if a minister of state not only connives at, but traffics in this great smuggling; which is the smuggling of law and justice? But I cry your mercy, Sister Barbara. We are to be reconciled to this by our modes of education. Girls are to be brought up in idle accomplishments, to trifle away all their time, that they may never examine truth, or even discover it. So that when they become wives and mothers, they are

to breed and educate another race of fools and hypocrites. Thus the object of your civilization is to drive truth far away from every land, where that harpy has established itself. All strive to do that holy work, which is begun by lawyers ; who do not even pretend to establish their arguments or discourses on principles, but upon precedents ; which means, that an act of falsehood or roguery that some of their roguish predecessors have already done, therefore may be done again. Then comes the clergy to sanctify those proceedings, because the church and state are one, and because the king is only God's lieutenant, and the whole is consummated by the virtuous, true, and upright representatives of the people, that we have the glory and happiness to live under. Nay, Sister Bab, this is the case. But why find fault with poor Rosaline, because she thinks for herself? Ever since she was a little child she always asked the "*why*" of every thing. Let a child ask *why*—leave it alone : only give it a true answer, and it will soon analyse ; and then it will find out the truth ; or look for it, if it has not the sharpness to discover it immediately. It certainly is much more difficult to teach a child falsehood than truth ; and that is the reason that

they find education so irksome to them in youth, because all they are taught is in opposition to their pure and innocent reason. I have observed the North-American Indians, who are so far-famed for their pithy, and wise, and witty sayings. Do you think, Barbara, that they are cleverer than European children? Not at all. But they have never to learn and then to unlearn. They are taught truth, and not extravagant fables at first; all which extravagant fables are to bolster up a sort of mock authority. A soldier is open-hearted and brave, solely because the moment he enters into the army he has but one education. His comrades form him, correct his absurdities: he forms friendships—he obeys but one plain command; and the uncertainty of his roving life makes him fear less the loss of that life, than of passing it in dull monotony. He is not debased by huckstering; and though he may occasionally storm a city and plunder it; that, with all its horrors, does not degrade his nature equally to perpetually huckstering: therefore, he is governed by fine feelings, because selfishness will serve him no turn. You accuse me of giving Rosaline no education. Has she not been taught to read and write! What

would you have, you unreasonable woman? Must we be taught to think? That is to put Mrs. Barbara's conceits into the head of Miss Rosaline de Vere—that is what you call education. Education is merely, in my sense, a method of acquiring notions and knowledge. Let the method be good; and if there be capacity, the knowledge will flow in fast enough, unless you have filled up the receptacle with nonsense and lies. I am a plain, rough, old soldier; and you must take my letters as they are. You will say, they are mess-room conversation; well, and I have often been in other societies and heard greater folly talked. I am a little ruffled at your letter; because my child is the only remaining comfort of my unfortunate life. I gaze upon her as my idol; or, as a devotee does upon the Madona. But I excuse you, dear sister. You have only lived in one circle in London; and you know nothing of the world. Adieu.

Your affectionate brother,

AUBREY DE VERE.

CLORINDA TO ROSALINE.

Florence, November 20th.

YESTERDAY I accompanied my father to the Cabinet of Natural History. Rinaldo gave me his arm. This was the first day of my new lecturer. He did it most awkwardly; he mistook one object for another: his wits appeared quite wandering. He looked down;—was absent:—his manner, usually so frank and easy, was extremely embarrassed; and we made no progress whatever. I saw nothing—heard nothing—nor could understand any thing. How embarrassment, my dear friend, is catching! I know not what sort of a flutter I felt; and seemed to be either in another existence, or to be wrapt up in a sort of atmosphere, that gave me a new existence—a sort of swimming of the senses; a flutter in my side, attended now and then with pain—throbs as it were; an unsteadiness of eye, and an uncertainty of speech. Yet I felt, for the first time, a sort of all-powerful protection; that state of anxiety which gives infinite pleasure; because, it seems to make us independent of every thing, except that which

gives the security. This we lean upon. This unaccountable something renders the rest of the world indifferent, because we do not seem to want it. But all these sensations are attended with some sort of alarm—a gentle alarm I grant. They say, that short absences re-invigorate love ; and that long ones destroy it. But, dearest Rosaline, I am ashamed to write to you in this strain ; it is quite unbecoming. But you have acquired such an ascendancy over me, that I must write to you ; and if I proceed to force my pen, I am sure it would write nothing else. I can neither bear facts now, nor reasoning. I take up my books—think I am reading ; but my eyes gaze on vacancy, and the book falls from my hand. I am uneasy about the time—I count the clock—I walk about—sit down—talk to myself, and all without knowing well what I am about. What does this mean ? Why cannot I collect my wits ? You are a great philosopher, Rosaline ; I wish you were at my elbow, to tell me what all this means. You would give me a learned dissertation upon sympathies and antipathies. Why do I loathe the sight of —, and think of nothing else but — ? I dare not write the name, because I begin to blush to myself. Blushing is a sure monitor, though

not a secret one ; though I am now alone, I feel a tingle—aye, and as abashed as if a whole society were looking upon me. Is not this singular? Sometimes I have felt shame when I have thought of some silly thing that I have said, or of a foolish figure that I have made a year ago. Memory brings the scene present to us again. Oh ! is not this the buds or blossom of that passion that may hereafter devour my whole being? Its expression is now retained by bashfulness. But when it becomes a full blown sunflower, it will turn upon the sun—its god, that commands it. Novels and romances tell me that women creep by degrees into love ; whilst man, more impetuous, plunges into it at once headlong, reckless of every consequence. But, ah ! alas ! when its influence is over with him, it then begins to lay hold of our being ; and if sympathy does not continue, what a frightful chasm yawns between the two ! Oh ! state most horrible ! Not to be endured :—but endured often, until madness or death closes the scene. But I have not that inspiration in me that makes me prognosticate the future. I am sure it is the highest order of beings only that have that faculty ; and that, I have heard you say, is the reason that makes such sensitive people

often so melancholy. I have also heard you say— (but is not this a fancy of yours, Rosaline?) that there is something melancholy and sinister in the countenance of those who have premature melancholy and sinister destinies. I have heard you quote these lines of that feeling poet who says :

“ And coming events cast their shadows before !”

I think it is Campbell of all your English poets of the present day ; he is the least open to criticism. Because he is the most correct ; and at the same time he possesses an high toned sentiment, that touches the heart and thrills the soul. What is poetry, if it does not accomplish this ? There are many good verse makers, but few poets. I have heard you say, that Milton said of Dryden, “ that he was a good rhymers, but no poet ;” and you added, that you did not think that criticism too severe. Dryden argues admirably in verse, but that is not poetry. But you have given me great comfort, you Sybil ; you have said that I resemble the Juditha of Alhora in the Pitti Palace. What a compliment ! That I have a principle of warm, strong, sensitive life, that will resist the deepest sinister destinies. You have sighed in making the contrast between me and yourself. I

have not such a deep reach as you have, nor can I see so far before me : that is, I am not so much in affinity with the high intellectual atmosphere that you always insist surrounds us, but more in a warm sensitive atmosphere. It is not so rapidly perishing as the other ; but I have got into the highest mysteries of nature. You say that all our different beings are modified differently ; and that the moral and physical atmosphere that surrounds us, does not act with more or less force upon us, but we receive the impressions differently, accordingly as we are formed. Therefore, a person like you or like me would receive different impressions from a third person, whether man or woman : that is to say, with regard to the love of one, and the friendship of the other. But love with me is ardent, perpetual anxiety. I must have the object present to me. I cannot love, as you do, in recollection—upon anticipations ; but that perpetual support to lean upon—that truth, and free intercourse—that blind and submissive attention—that obedience to every wish, every caprice must be attended to ; fixed upon one sole object, for the whole world now becomes indifferent to me. But if I lose that object, I lose the world. Well then, this constitutes surely, a necessity—a destiny—a

fate. Then we cannot help ourselves. I *must* hate, and I *must* like. What can I do? I must then fear my mother, and I *must* have a confidence in my father. I *must* then loathe the very sight of ——and delight in the presence of ——. Well then, I cannot help writing to you all I feel. Why should I tease myself? Things will take their course. Not having such an energetic mind as you have, I cannot comprehend the vital principle absolute; or, that we are the centre of our being. I therefore pray to an all-protecting Providence to take care of me; and the habits of my childhood direct that prayer through the intercession of the Madona. At all events, philosopher as you are, you must admit that we have been happy in the mythology of our religion;—that we have constantly before our eyes, two of the most beautiful objects in being—a young woman and a young child. They say, this was a continuation of Venus and Cupid. Well, the same idea then struck our Roman ancestors, the Greeks before them; and the Phœnicians, possibly, before them. I have forced myself into the discussion, to forget a little what my letter began about, and to settle my spirits before

I go to dinner ; because, as *he* generally dines here, I must neither show him [nor the rest what occupies me most.

Adieu, my dear friend,

CLORINDA.



ROSALINE TO CLORINDA.

Bath, December 15th.

YOUR letter gave me great satisfaction. I highly approve of your choice, in many respects ; although I most anxiously recommend you to precipitate no measures.

It is certainly, viewing this matter calmly, a circumstance highly praiseworthy and disinterested in you to reject so advantageous a match in every point of view, for your intended has many qualifications, that most women would be delighted with, and think themselves highly flattered by. He is handsome, young, rich, of an excellent family ; yet, with all these advantages, you not only reject, but have a perfect aversion for him, and are weaned from the whole of your family and

connexions, who take his part. This latter is natural enough. But I am not surprised that your mother, who is not in love, should be highly displeased. Certainly our sympathies are most unaccountable. I should never have thought that Rinaldo would have ever made an effect upon so lively a girl as you. He is extremely thoughtful and studious—absorbed in politics, I may say devoted to them,—they are his ruling passion. His countenance, though strong and marked, possesses none of the playfulness of his rivals, except being bold and graceful on horseback. He is utterly devoid of what are called accomplishments,—despises music and dancing. There is a steady glare in his eye, that marks an unyielding stubbornness of purpose. Those eyes are the very contrast of his countrymen: instead of being full and black, are sharp and grey. But I own they look as if they would not blink, if *he* were burning at the stake for his opinions. He seldom speaks upon trifling or amusing subjects, and his smile is contemptuous and sarcastic. Though his territory is extensive, his fortune is small; and as I have heard him say, among the most rugged of the mountains of the Romagna. I fear you will be wretchedly housed in an old

tattered palace at Ravenna. How will the gay Florentine submit to this? Her caro sposo poring all the morning over the German philosophers, and the liveliest book in the house, Hobbes's *Leviathan*; plotting, indeed, all the evening to shake off the yoke under which his country groans, but exposed to become the prey of the filthiest vermin that crawl, spies and informers, and who infect all societies, with the humble prospect of the carcere durissimo, or the condemned prison, where he is to end a wretched life, because the cruellest of all despotism is the most dastardly, and dare not attempt a public execution, but murder their victims in a narrow cell, with overpowering chains, mouldy bread, tainted water, mildew and damp. Oh! Clorinda, what a brave heart thou hast! to look forward to these contingencies. Oh! Rinaldo, your character is worthy of the sternness of the middle ages. Oh! dear Italy! despotism and torture must be the stern nurses that will train your rising youth. The steel of their chains must enter into their souls, and nerve their hands to wield the sword of victory or the avenging dagger of defeat. Oh! that the captive's sighs may, loud and deep, be carried on the bleak north winds from the Alps,

and sweep on every side to the ocean, until their murmurs, rising louder and louder, shall, like the last trumpet, raise a prostrate people from their living tombs, to inflict vengeance on their barbarous oppressors. Oh! that then the accents and acclaims of victory may swell, until they drown the fierce tempest of the Apennines, and hush the roar of the surrounding ocean. That Italy may then exclaim, "Oh! death, where is thy sting? Oh! grave, where is thy victory?" Methinks then I shall see the vision of the genius of her ancient glory standing on the headless trunk of barbarian liberticides, the light of her blooming countenance dispelling the clouds of the long dark night, during which she has slumbered, fretted, and disturbed by only occasional and partial dreams of liberty. Oh! Clorinda, these are my orisons, these are my votive offerings. Beware, thou unhappy maiden, what dismal destinies you may have to encounter. The quiet and staid government of reason that presides in this land, prescribes for our countrymen a less brilliant, less hazardous range of exertion. Selfishness and corruption are what they have to guard against, and to combat. In England, far-spread intelligence precludes the necessity of the

appeal to arms. The sword here yields to the pen, and to the tongue. Inward shame and public scorn are the dungeons in which England imprisons liberticides. The melancholy forebodings of my destinies are my future struggle with the hard-hearted fate. For here our state is such, that our greatest misfortunes are domestic—whatsoever pride and exultation we have are national. Here our contest is intellectual. With you, I fear you must pass through a fiery ordeal. The priesthood have regenerated you with a baptism of water; but you must regenerate yourselves with a baptism of blood. Sybil like, I have been oracular; these thoughts oppress me at present; I can say no more. Clorinda, have you the sternness of Lady Macbeth! Then strive to unite your fortunes to Rinaldo. Read for me that most divine effusion of our divinest poet, the great Milton, must excuse me for this apostrophe; for though his mighty genius went forth clothed in robes embroidered by the purest gold of antient lore, Shakspeare fires more my fancy, covered with the patchwork tattered garment of nature. But there is surely an era in the moral as well as in the physical world; there is no accelerating it; there is no staying it; it cometh when it

listeth. This era, this end, this determinate moment of time, marking a point on the circle of eternity,—makes its stay at this generation, or at that—rouses this generation, or that—raises the whirlwind of the loftiest passions. Glorious will be the era of Italy! Sweet even for the blessed martyrs of her liberty to obtain their regeneration, though by the baptism of their blood.

Adieu, my Clorinda,

ROSALINE.



THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Bath, December 17th.

My letter had already gone, when I found I had omitted to observe on one of the most remarkable points of it.—“Your prayers to all-protecting Providence.” This is the most important part in our whole existence; because, even our existence is contained in it. We are not certain of life for an instant. How, then, can we be certain of what life contains? The globe that we

stand upon is irresistibly whirled round the sun, and all subordinate motion is as irresistible as that grand one, because all depend upon it. Our vitality, nay, the particles that form the globe, and all upon its surface, are held together by that movement. Necessity is thus established, in all things, except idealism. But that dances here and there out of this globe, because our ideas are boundless; and they flit only and play around our existence, but form no part of its reality; but that great unknown power that invariably directs all things, is unsearched and unsearchable, whatever its designation may be, whether *It* or *Him*, or they the fates, we know not. For we can have no experience, but an awful conclusion of its existence. We see it pouring forth life. We see it scattering death. We see it gladdening the heart with joy, desolating it with sorrow, and sickening it with disappointment. Our fancy strives to effect our escape, but our reality is seized every moment by the iron grasp of fate—unsparing, certain, immediate, and irresistible. In realism, we are as free as a stone to roll from the mountain-top, or water to flow downwards; for the laws which cause this, modify and direct our march. Fate directs the murderer's knife,

and fate the witness's testimony, the juryman's verdict, and the judge's sentence; justice, virtue, and vice, are the colours, then, of our intellectual rainbow. In the insolence of our fancy, we swell ourselves into demi-gods; nay, we climb up into Heaven, and sit by the fates themselves. We assist at the banquet of the immortal gods, but fate comes and gives us a blow, that stuns us for our presumption, and we discover that we are very mortals. But will the inexorable hand of fate be set aside? Will the earth run off its course, or will the sun cease to shine? Will the eternal stop? Vain and foolish man! Keep these fancies for your oratory, but bring them not into social life, to tease and fret your neighbours, to put your foot on their necks, and trample them to the earth, and rise upon your own roguery and their baseness. Yes, Clorinda, supplicate the Madona. But she lies between your conscience and the Great Eternal. Bring her not into action, for perchance you may saddle her with your own faults. For even the Eternal has been saddled with the faults of men, and by men! Who are the blasphemers, then? They who have made his name the pass-word for their selfishness; that is, their crimes. Clorinda, on mystical subjects,

our language must be mystical too. Keep your mind free, keep your heart true, and then smile on fate. Believe me, something whispers me, of all our ills, death is the most tolerable, for then we shall gently repose in the bosom of our mother earth. Adieu, Clorinda. When you are perplexed with these earthly considerations, which are sufficiently humiliating, fly into pure idealism; then riot in your transient fancy; then find freedom, and leave fate far behind; then you leap over the bounds of time and space. Adieu, dearest friend.

ROSALINE.

CLORINDA TO ROSALINE.

Florence, December 5th.

MY embarrassment increases my difficulties; I can hardly conceal the one; how then am I to escape the other? Rinaldo has found opportunities to open his mind to me. Nothing positive passed; but we understood each other. Alas! that others may not understand us too, and see

too clearly into our thoughts. He disclosed to me the cause of his exile. He stands on the fearful brink of a precipice; but I have seized him already by the hand; if he is precipitated headlong, I follow. Oh Rosaline! my fortunes are more rapidly advancing than yours; they are less ideal, but they encompass me on every side. I am silent and sullen in society. Whenever I am addressed, I hardly answer; and when I do, the responses are vague, muttering and unsatisfactory. I artfully mention occasionally Pietro's name, to put them off the true scent. But my mother and the Abbatè are not such novices in the world to be long deceived. Rinaldo is not his own master; he is watched by the police; his fortune is sequestered; his means of existence as to money are very limited; where can he fly, and how can he subsist? No, I am destined to linger—the very causes of his distress animate me, they heighten the interest that I take in him, and warm my heart that now beats against my side as if it would burst its tenement.

He has given me the whole progress of his opinions, his feelings, and consequently his difficulties—nay, his persecution; he has let me into a new scene of life. You, my friend, treated of

these matters in general terms. Your theory he has explained practically, for he is the victim. I, who never heard of tyrants before, but in history, in poetry, now begin to feel that such odious monsters exist. They are more horrible than the monsters which Hercules slew, because they are clothed in the garb of humanity; they assume a human shape, and they roam about, not for their food, like the tigers and lions of the desert, yet are they as sanguinary, and more malignant. Last night was full of terrors for me; I passed it, feverish and alarmed; every shaking of the window terrified me. I tossed and turned, and could find no rest. My slumbers were broken, and my dreams startling. I felt that I was falling, falling from an immense height, and that when down, I was stuck so fast in the earth that I could not disengage myself any more. I awoke in a shudder—a cold sweat overspread my limbs. Is not this a forecast of the future? Why should we not have presentiments? I know you believe in surprising turns of fortune: the great science of history instructs us in it. What else is it, says Pietro Perruvini, who is so learned, but a sketch of fortunes?—he says that men who are fortunate in their youth, seldom are so in their age; and

early misfortunes end in subsequent happiness. How glorious it is to feel that fortune may ever favour us, that she may take a sudden turn with us at a moment ! An instant since, a dark shower obscured my window, I could scarcely see, the rain pelted against it as in anger ; now I have a gleam of sunshine. This is the picture of my position. Oh ! Sybil, you do say truly, when you say that we are led by an invisible hand. Pardon this digression. Let me go on with my narrative. Why did I shudder ? Morning soon dawned. I determined to seek refuge in the church. I thought it an age until the hour of mass arrived. I took la Josephina, as usual, and went with hasty steps to the Santo Spirito. It is not so frequented as the Santa Trinita, which is more the Sunday church of good company. The obscurity of the situation of the other pleased me more. Rosaline, for half an hour, I forgot you : I remembered not the oracular Sybil. I substituted providence for fate. I contemplated the Madona ; in warm and fervent strains I implored her intercession ; my heart was filled. I fancied the Majesty of heaven heard my pious petition. At all events, I rose from my devotion with a feeling of satisfaction and delight that I had not felt for twenty-four

hours before. My heart was lighter as I returned, and I met my mother with a more cheerful countenance; but not Rinaldo with less embarrassment. My happiness was for a while so great, that I did not envy your strength of mind, that can stand unshaken and alone in the midst of human contingencies. Yet the Abbatè does not think that I am sufficiently religious, because I cannot give into forms. Mine is the religion of the heart. Yet with the two objects that now affect me most I have sufficient friendship left to subscribe myself, unalterably yours,

CLORINDA.



ROSALINE TO CLORINDA.

Bath, December 19th.

You do me great injustice in your last, my dearest friend, when you say that you forgot Rosaline for half an hour at the shrine of the Madona. Why should you not forget her? You mistake her quite. She is not dogmatic. She insists upon none following her opinions, her views. She objects to no flights of fancy, to no ideal speculation; to no mystical comfort, to no

version of eternal power, or mode of propitiation of that power. Really you do me injustice, and seem to charge the same fault upon me that I so strongly condemn in others; that is, of being dogmatical, of striving to force my opinions upon others. I never object to any sort or set of opinions that do not interfere with civil or political liberty. I pique myself upon being eminently tolerant: I ask for the same toleration for my own opinions. My views may be different from others. But all mankind in their senses acknowledge a *Superior Power*, because their experience teaches them that they are called into life and hurled into death; because they feel ills and benefits for which they cannot account; and because they have daily experience of the uncertainty of human affairs. To deny that Superior Power would be to deny our own existence, which would amount to universal negation. If we possessed power ourselves, we never should choose to die. We should have all benefit, and no ills, and there would be no difficulties to contend with, because all would be certainty. In fact our realism would be as free as our idealism. Now this not being the condition of human nature, and the denying or avowal of God being one and the same thing,

seeing every instant that we do acknowledge a Supreme Power, a destiny, why should I object to any one forming, or naming, or conceiving, or modifying that Supreme in any shape that their ideas may choose to give it? Why should I object to the immortal gods of the ancients; to the Trinity of the moderns; to the Jehovah of the Jews; to the Manitou of the North American Indians; to the grand Lama; to the cause of the causes of Cicero; the great unknown of the Chinese; the Madona of Clorinda, and the vital principle absolute of Rosaline? Does not sound logic teach me that nature, fate, fortune, providence, eternal direction, cause, omnipotent will, are all synonymous terms; and that mankind have in all ages personified them, sometimes into one deity, sometimes into more, as the symbols of mere terms. The essences then of original power are all of them synthetical, that is, a compound. The personifications are the symbols, and therefore various. So Jupiter was the symbol of the Supreme Power concluded by the ancients. They then divided and subdivided this primary power down to the gods of cross-ways, then to demigods and deified heroes. These the Christian church adopted, and called martyrs and saints. The

whole, then, is founded upon the same basis, viz. the forced, necessary, immutable acknowledgment by man of superior power to himself, whether he denies God or not, which means, in other words, whether his idea of the supreme power coincides with the ideas of (superior power to himself) concluded by another man. Now some Dominican friar, some God-fearing Calvinist, some evangelical methodist will say that I am denying revelation. Let them show me what revelation is; let them give me a better or a more general definition of revelation than I can give them. I hold, therefore, that revelation is the synthesis between our experience and our reason. Our reason teaching a supreme power; our experience, the necessity of obeying it. That is, between our practical reason and our theoretical reason; for in our practical reason we personify the synonymous terms of universal eternal power and moral laws. Consequent upon laws are rewards and punishments; in our practical reason, therefore, we impose conditions; these conditions are deduced from conventions; therefore practical reason, (viz. that in which is contained our duty) forms a convention, and then a connexion with theoretical reason, where we find the basis whereupon the con-

vention is fixed, that is, God. Let them then trace more clearly the origin of revelation than this. But then they say I do not personify the forms of this argument. I have no objection to the personification of forms; they render things more easily understood by the multitude, who are wearied and alarmed at abstract deductions. Practical reason has in all ages personified the moral lawgiver, and deified him. Apollo gave the Greeks their laws; that is, in other words, practical reason has personified theoretical reason. Now, as both these sorts of reason are contained in our own breast as they emanate from our brain, and are nurtured in our breasts. They have been stamped with our own image. All existence having been stamped in our own existence. For the stupidest blockhead that ever pretended to think cannot assume that we view things out of ourselves, because that would be as much as to say that we thought in other people and in other things, and not in our mind, and obtained not knowledge through our own sensations. A thing to exist positively to us must exist in us. That is to say, we must have an intuition of it. One or more of the senses must come into contact with it. Then we become the receptacles, we re-

ceive it. What is our first impression?—that we meet with power greater than our own. A man then may deny God, but he cannot deny this proposition. Therefore I have proved my proposition, that the denial or avowal of God comes to one and the same thing: that is, we deny the terms on which supreme power is expressed, or the name whereby it is designated; therefore, though *relative* atheism may exist, that is, one man denying the god of another man, *positive* atheism cannot exist, because no man can deny his own god without denying his own existence. Well then, Clorinda, what is the corollary? Universal toleration. Because who is to decide between one man's symbol or another of Universal Power? that is, between one man's god and another's. If we could go to one common umpire, and ask of him, which symbol was right, then which religion was true, and we were all agreed to abide by his decision, then the consequence would be that that decision should be adopted and the others would be rejected. Hence would be the intolerance of them. But there is no such umpire—Where are we to find him? There may be pretenders to such a place, but if we are not all agreed to choose him for umpire,

it is the same as if he did not pretend. The umpire then lies in every one's own breast. What folly then in civil or political power to peep into our breasts and say, No, the umpire shall not rest here as to religious symbols, but on our laws. This is tyranny with a vengeance. For though the law ecclesiastical of a state is contained in the civil law, yet to vex people with the exertion of it, is to invade their most sacred property, that to which they hold to more than their actual property. So that every one holds more to his symbol of universal power, to his fears and hopes thereon depending, than he does to his civil liberty or his real property. The first basis of liberty therefore in a state is the recognition of every one's right, not to be disturbed in this particular. So is it persecution for one man to dictate to another what his symbol shall be, and moreover rank folly, because the symbol is there in spite of himself. Then all the men, who have been punished with death on account of their religious opinions, from Socrates down to the present day, were so because their minds could not (because here would and could are one and the same) adopt the symbol of other men. Can any thing more absurd exist among rational or reasoning creatures? As soon

therefore as mankind have imagined their symbols, and established their system upon the supposition of the existence of these symbols, their personification and deification of power absolute, they insist on others adopting them, and propagate with fire and sword, and when that cannot be done, with malignity, insolence, pride, throughout the world, their systems. They are all alike, and no one can reasonably see the slightest distinction between any one. All are equally intolerant, because they are equally absurd and contradictory. For in proportion as they want logic to support them, in the same proportion they appeal to force, they talk of one being more enlightened than another, as if pure feeling could be enlightened! But this would never have taken place had it not been for the roguery of civil government, and the selfishness of its supporters, and the ignorance of the multitude. Excuse me, Clorinda, you touched me on a tender point. You accused me of intolerance. Proceed—Supplicate the Madona, if she yields you comfort. Follow whatever your feelings dictate—Let every one follow theirs. Believe me, nothing would shock me more than the least suspicion of intolerance. I shudder at the bare notion. My frame is in a

tremor when I hear of an intolerant person. Universal toleration is the mother of charity: it is the expansion of the heart. Let the gloomy Calvinist enjoy the delightful pleasure of the thoughts of reprobation and election. Let him feel the ecstatic thrill of eternal damnation. On the other hand, he whose mind misgives him that death is an eternal sleep, finds his comfort also. The Catholic runs the gauntlet through his sins in purgatory, and then escapes into Paradise. Why should they not have all their fancies? I am a spiritualist, and feel that I belong to that region—we have all our narrow views. They all form part of the universal religion, which means that mankind acknowledge a power superior to their own, and then personify it. Having so done, from convention with it, and fix its laws in their own breasts. Then from the uncertainty of their lives, from more ills than benefits befalling them, indulge in hope, then carry hope to the absolute—that is, form a sort of notion of hope extended and abstracted from our positive being, which immediately furnishes the idea of immortality. These then are the seeds of particular religion or positive, as it is so called. But the whole is contained in this proposition,—“That we are led by an in-

visible hand." Now what does all this end in? Three distinct systems: that of the positive religionists; that is, those who adhere to some form or dogmas, which is enforced by the laws of states; secondly, the spiritualists, which are the contemplative philosophers, who understand the essences of things and can separate and distinguish them; thirdly, the materialists, who can do little but from experience, and who do not analyse deeply. So mankind is divided between these three classes. The ignorant, the thoughtless, or the unlearned belong to the first, namely, the positive religionists—the contemplative and sentimental, to the second—and the practical, experimental forms the third. The first teach God and immortality and moral laws, from dogmas; that is, from authority. The second teach these three propositions from pure reason and sentiment. The third deny these categories altogether, and hold to nothing but experience, denying intention or impulse, which is that self-moving power that constitutes philosophical free-will, and yet the will may be compared to small circles described within the scope of destiny.

Toleration! toleration! toleration is my motto. I am accustomed to these speculations, Clorinda,

and none of them alarm me. The uncertainty of life makes it unhappy enough, without adding the additional gratuitous misery to it, of being intolerant of the ideas of others, because it all comes to ideas at last; for symbols are contained in ideas. It is full time that my pen should now come to an anchor, after the lecture that I have given you. Notwithstanding which I embrace you with all my heart.

ROSALINE.

SIR ARTHUR ATHERSTONE TO MISS DE VERE.

Bath, December 20th.

Madam,

HAVING the honour and delight to live exclusively in your society, your receipt of this letter will at once intimate to you its purport. I confess that the style of your conversation, your generally reserved and almost solitary deportment has rendered it impossible for me to approach you in any manner at all particular in any other guise.

The reverential awe, with which Miss de Vere's talents and mind have hitherto struck me, has pre-

vented me making those advances, which not only the habits of the world require, but which seem to be the most respectful, the most correct mode of offering to lay every thing I possess at her feet, and a heart not only captivated, but an understanding bewildered by her superior powers. Individually, I may not feel worthy of such a prize ; nay, it may be great presumption to pretend to it; yet I feel that I have this satisfaction, that I have rendered the highest tribute, by this offer, to her worth and excellence. Let not the shortness of the time of our acquaintance bar my solicitations. It can only prove rashness ; and rashness in such a cause is enthusiasm ; and enthusiasm, the highest devotion. I have attempted the chariot of the sun. My fall will not be inglorious ; the towering height of my ambition will preclude that judgment.

With trembling anxiety, awaiting my doom,

I have the honour most respectfully

To subscribe myself

Your most devoted,

ARTHUR ATHERSTONE.

MISS DE VERE TO SIR A. ATHERSTONE.

Bath, December 20th.

I SHOULD be guilty of injustice to you, Sir Arthur, were I to delay one moment answering a letter that has quite astonished me. For I must observe that after feeling exceedingly flattered and gratified by the high compliment in itself, (which every woman delights in,) after blushing for the very civil, and, I may say, exaggerated compliments contained in the strain of devotion in which it is written—notwithstanding all these circumstances, I must declare that my astonishment is great, because this letter is the first, nay, the slightest intimation that I have had, of the most distant inclination on your part, to take so serious a step. Hitherto I have not received the slightest intimation of it, from your manner or opinions, and I must say it is taking me rather by surprize upon the most important procedure of both our lives. Had not I other objections at this moment for so essentially changing the state that I am in, this undoubtedly would induce me to pause. Your offer is as advantageous as it is flattering, and far beyond my poor deserts. But that high independence of soul, which I feel

I possess, makes me strive my utmost to resist new and extraordinary destinies. Alas! the Fates may overcome me at last, but I have no right to tinge my letter with my habitual melancholy. Accept, my dear sir, my warmest thanks for your high compliment, and my fullest acknowledgments of the handsome form in which they were expressed, and believe me to remain,

Most truly and sincerely yours,

ROSALINE DE VERE.



SIR A. A. TO MRS. BARBARA BELMONT.

Marlborough, December 21st.

I HAVE to apologise, my dear Mrs. Belmont, for my sudden departure from Bath, without even asking your permission or taking your orders. But an affair that I have been engaged in, taking an unexpected turn, causes me to go to town immediately. I slept here last night, and I hasten to acquaint you from this place of the reason of my apparent inattention.

I remain, &c. &c.

A. A.

ROSALINE TO HER FATHER.

Bath, December 21st.

I ENCLOSE for my dearest father two letters, which are sufficiently plainly written to require no fuller explanation. I am aware that he may think I have taken a hasty step in rejecting what the world calls so advantageous a match. A perfectly amiable, well-bred gentleman, good-looking, well-informed, of an excellent family, and fifteen thousand a year clear, and an old family estate. Surely, my dearest father, this may startle you, and make you for a moment a little vexed with me. You will say that I am whimsical. No : but my heart was not filled, and our destinies are never accomplished until our heart is full ; then we are irresistibly driven. I have not been driven. Therefore it is clear, that in the book of fate, this step was not marked. Why should I apologise for following my destiny : for submitting to my fate ? I take neither blame nor praise for it. But I should take great blame in not acquainting you with what has passed, even at the risk of displeasing you. For my first duty towards you, is

implicit confidence, no reserve, whatever risks I may incur by such frankness. My aunt is extremely curious to know what has passed, and the reason of Sir Arthur's sudden departure. Of course she shall never know any thing of this from me; and to you alone the confidence, with propriety, could be made. I have but one request to make to my dearest father; that is, as my determination is immoveable, to abstain, if possible, from giving me any reply upon this subject, and let it rest for ever in oblivion. This is the earnest wish and hope of his most devoted,

Most affectionate

And dutiful Daughter,

ROSALINE.

MRS. BARBARA BELMONT TO SIR A. ATHERSTONE.

Bath, December 22d.

“WHAT means this tumult in a Vestal’s veins?” what flown, my dear Sir Arthur? what mishap do you fear, or has occurred? Really I should think, that you had been proposing to marry my niece, and that she had rejected you; but for one convincing reason: she maintains her usual manner. She neither exults, nor appears agitated. She gives no hints; no little female vanity comes out; no little mysterious looks; no inward calculation, counting of fingers, or talking to herself,—all symptoms, when a woman has a secret which she wishes *honestly* and discreetly to disclose. No knitting of brows, or abrupt changing of place, or tosses of the head, or hums, or dubious looks; all these are the indications of our minds, when something too strong to be locked up in our breasts is striving to make its escape through the feeble doors of our lips. A lady’s discretion is but a bad gaoler, her bosom a weak prison, and her tongue a door, the hinges of which are but too well oiled. By the way, let me

give you a piece of advice. Never tell a secret to a married woman, for if she is on good terms with her husband, he is sure to know it. If not, then she has a favourite flirt or admirer, who will extract it. A single woman is more trust-worthy, for we can keep our own secrets from each other. But we like to show superiority in conferring such obligations upon the men. And telling any thing new and secret gives the narrator a great superiority at the moment; and a reputation either of penetration or confidence reposed in him or them. Kings, they say, have the greatest delight in this particular, and such is their vanity, that they occasionally sacrifice their interests to it, and many a state secret has escaped from this motive. But why are you mysterious with me? why did you write your note from Marlborough? I know of no affair that has taken a turn, that should oblige your sudden departure. Indeed I cannot boast of much of your confidence, except as to things most indifferent. You are ready enough to make long dissertations upon your great acquirements. Now you have become a great collector of books. I must say, for a man of your reputed sense, this is the most expensive and trivial of all pursuits. Great readers are seldom

great collectors of books. They take those that elucidate their studies, and they wisely conclude, that the last edition is the best. Have you flown to town in search of an old manuscript that you will never be able to decypher, or a black-letter first edition of some unintelligible trash that issued from the press, the first year of its invention, and which you are to have cheap for one thousand pounds? Or do you wish the world to measure the size of your understanding by the size of your library? I am out of patience with you, Sir Arthur. You have such a dawdling uncertainty about you. You are spun out like a modern novel, until all point or pith is lost.

By the bye, from a word or two that I heard you let fall, I think you would like to marry my niece; that is to say, you would like to possess her, because she is something superior, as you would one of the most celebrated Claudes, or a Corregio, or a Raphael, or one of your first Dutch editions, to excite the envy of others. Your vanity would be flattered in hearing of Lady Atherstone's praises; your artists would be more complimentary than usual, and the making her sit to painters under various characters, would fill up the tedium of a London morning. For you want

excitements even where others find amusements. But she will not be your doll, I assure you. And I begin to think that is the principal point of view in which you consider a wife. No, my dear friend, the Sybil, the Cassandra, the Eloïse, will require a little more energy to decide her choice. I know you better than you know yourself, and you never will marry, but for vanity, to hear the praises of your excellent discrimination in your ears. I wish that you were more natural; but do not attempt roguery, and particularly with me, who know you by heart; but here I am exciting that very vanity, that I accuse you of having too large a share of. Because you must think, after this letter, that I take a great interest in you. No, indeed, I am only amusing myself. You are an excellent subject to exercise my pen upon, and as we have here a sharp black frost, my pen partakes a little of the weather. Do not think that you have at all excited my curiosity by your mysterious note from the road. Far be it from me to pry into your profound secrets, or more profound views. I have no doubt but that your schemes will be carried with the success that the eminent projector of them deserves. Whenever

you shall condescend to honour me with your notice or protection, I shall feel highly honoured. In the mean time, believe me,

Your's truly,

B. BELMONT.

SIR A. ATHERSTONE TO MRS. B. BELMONT.

London, December 26th.

WHAT can your extraordinary epistle mean? Your raillery, dear madam, is rather spiteful. Have I deserved it? Mystery indeed! Who is mysterious now? "What means this tumult in a Vestal's veins!" who is the Vestal? am I? The metaphor does not fit, methinks. Are you? Doth it fit now?

I will answer you as Fainall does to Mirabel: "No, I'll give you your revenge, another time when you are not so indifferent; you are thinking of something else now, and play too negligently; the coldness of a losing gamester lessens

the pleasure of the winner. I'd no more play with a man that slighted his ill fortune, than I would make love to a woman that undervalued the loss of her reputation ;" for, as Mirabel says, " I have a taste extremely delicate, and am for refining on my pleasure." Dear Mrs. Barbara ! what a strange jumble now perturbs your heated brain ! Proposals rejected ! No symptom, however, in the lady. Do you think that my memory is so short ? Is all your gay raillery on the marriage state sunk, with me, in oblivion ? But I have provoked you. Blessed and happy moment ! Who is indifferent now ? Who wants decision now ? I think the soft zephyrs which fan your swelling breast, waft to my ear these emphatic words, " insolent and provoking creature." I am contented. A despairing admirer of your sex hears these words with as much pleasure as an author reads the bitterest abuse of his work in a review. So we are making some way now. I smitten indeed ! with your stoical niece ! I admire her as I do a statue, as an oracle. But marriage has not been set down in my horoscope. No, Mrs. Belmont, that is our last refuge. Let me first run the risk of being shipwrecked in the storm of love, before I cast anchor in that

haven. I am not yet in such a state of despair as to be driven into the harbour of wedlock. Boys marry for want of experience, whilst young desire fans high love's flame. Men marry through despair, when love's zephyrs begin to blow coldly on them. I steer a middle course. Too old to catch fire; too young to have become jaded. You have put me on my mettle, and I am become epigrammatic. This fencing suits me well; but I fear a rejoinder from you will demolish me quite. Take my quotation from Congreve, as suits best your humour. In jest or earnest, ironical or true. But whatever fencing we may have, whatever upon this matter my speculative opinions may be, believe me in truth,

Your most devoted,

A. ATHERSTONE.

MRS. BARBARA BELMONT TO SIR A. ATHERSTONE.

Bath, December 28th.

YOUR last letter deserves a reply of unmeasured reprehension. It is written in all the insolence of anticipated triumph. You have played between two projects with me—marriage and love; that is, honour and disgrace. It is come to this pass. Indignation and rage forbid me longer to dissemble. You have laboured to interest me; you have drawn me out into a protracted correspondence. You are in possession of letters of mine, written with the most innocent freedom. Nay, in some of the first, not doubting the uprightness of my own heart, I may have permitted myself a warmer strain than propriety could justify. Alas! this is ever the case, when a woman of warm feelings allows her pen the slightest license. It is but too rapid a conductor from her heart. Her tongue falters and hesitates. Her eyes may sometimes be hypocritical, but her pen is ever true. Not so with the cold-blooded calculating villainy that directs that of the man of gallantry. For his is a very special pleader, takes her at an

advantage, fences with her, and disarms her. The woman who writes is surely undone, for shame, modesty, embarrassment, all which neutralize the intensity of personal declarations, here are lost. The unconscious paper blushes not; the burning words remain. They are flown. How, then are they to be recalled? How are they to be effaced? What ungenerous use may be made of them! The victory is half obtained, for half the shame stands confessed. How we like to put ourselves in your power, to gratify our little vanity, to break in upon the monotony of our existence by sentimental excitation. It is our accursed vanity that sets these springes for us; we are caught like birds; then to demand the surrender of these evidences of our foibles; that is, to break at once, or to have the dreadful alternative of being refused, that is, to offend, and leave the power of our own punishment in the hands of the offended party. Oh! ungenerous man! You would not have written your last insolent letter, had you not had in your possession those records of my former folly. I broke off; you consented,—submitted,—was respectful; but you held the records fast. The arrival of my niece renewed the correspondence; and here am

I again, taunted—insulted. Marriage made a jest. The most sacred ties,—a snare for youth, or a refuge for the destitute in love. This written to me!—to me indeed! To one of spotless reputation—of unblemished purity of conduct. But, alas! what shall I say? One, whose overweening vanity has permitted her to sport with love's most dangerous arrows—unreserved letters. How am I to recal them, or how to forget them? Is there no honour—no generosity left? No appeal to justice? Ah! indeed, where did justice and love ever come together? Are they acquainted? Yes, when the magistrate tacks the sheepish clown to his teeming mistress. I can no more! Shame, rage, and disappointment swell my breast, and arrest my pen.

B. B.

SIR A. ATHERSTONE TO MRS. B. BELMONT.

London, December 30th.

AH! is the gay coquet fixed at last? Is the flaunting beauty become sober? Has the illusion vanished? *So we may be interested.* The easy, gay Epicurean, who teaches friendship as a virtue, finds that it will not always remain "the boundary of the range" of her heart. Friendship! Friendship! Thou gay deceiver! Art thou always on an equality? Wilt thou never demand a *pledge*? Platonics are sickly and moon-stricken; but your Epicurean friendship will have its pledge. This is nature, dear Madam. Friendship between men ceases to be so when the pledge is demanded. But shew me first, in every particular, the equality of the sexes—the identity of the sexes; then I will assert friendship without a pledge, or friendship will be lukewarm indeed. But it seems you are for withdrawing these pledges—these Love's arrows that you have skirmished with. Be it so; they shall be surrendered: but only by my hands into your hands—face to face shall you receive them, and only from your own lips will I receive

my doom, a congé for ever. With your own hands, and in my presence, you shall light Love's pyre. Forgive me : it is you that have given it the sacred name—from your lips has the hallowed word escaped. Charge not me with insolence, for your own confession. Thus it is ever with the wayward nymph ; bewildered and distracted she makes her confession. She unlocks the secrets of her heart ; her disordered mien—her unmeasured words betray her. Then ! O Justice, hear ! We are charged with insolence, forsooth. " What means this tumult in a Vestal's veins ? " The tumult then is the swain's insolence. Admirable logician, you are ! Methinks I watch you when you shall have scanned these words. First " rage will flush your cheeks, swell in your breast, and sparkle in your eyes,"—biting of lips—doubting—hesitating—recalling past passages—conning over new expedients. Shall I break ? But oh ! what a blank in our existence. Then sentiment excited ; then extinguished. Symbol of death ! Frightful idea ! Shall I go on ?—Where then is my wounded pride ! Shall I have my revenge ? Oh ! that is sweet : but how come at it ! Shall I submit ? No, death first ; disgrace, dishonour. Do I love ? No, I hate. Then, welcome the

conditions; but they are immoveable—never to meet again. Already to have exposed my weakness, to make a desperate enemy. No hopes of future conciliation, and thus left. What a horrid notion—to be left abandoned! Oh! this is indeed intolerable: nothing can soothe it. Let me quench it in a flood of tears. Yes, this will be the soliloquy. You see I save you trouble. I anticipate the future. Are you not a coquet convicted? Do you desire quarter? No. But I will punish you no further. Then you have your choice: the alternative is in your hands—no more letters, but my summons. Before your bar I must appear. I shall strive to bear the hard sentence, but I must have it from the voice of my judge. No letters, no distant equivocal messages. I must be struck into nought by her basilisk eyes. If she be that heartless coquet, then the sentence, and I plead guilty too, must be carried into execution. But if the gay coquet was but the outward manner, covering over the true and honest heart within, then I am saved. But how? In your niece's constant phrase, I leave that to the active Fates, for I see not my way through Cupid's mysteries.

A. ATHERSTONE.

MRS. B. BELMONT TO SIR A. ATHERSTONE.

Bath, Jan. 3d.

WHAT have I done to be so treated—mocked—insulted—scorned? What a fearful prelude! This is, however, our sex's lot. We are goddesses while the fit is on you. Put but the slightest stay, or clog to your inclinations, Oh! what jilts! what coquets! False hearted—cold; any punishment, no matter what. We deserve it all. Then you heap insult on mockery, and riot in the savage malignity of your disappointment. But we become more tender. The fortress surrenders at discretion: possession soon cools the fiery appetite, whetted by vanity, and stimulated by resistance. Cold and chilling neglect follows. We are left to weep over the wrecks of our hopes, and our reputation. The first cankers our heart: the second blights our fame! Shame, sorrow, or repentance close the scene unless, indeed, plunged into the depths of despair, we seek another trial of skill. Here we may indeed be victors: because, we have vanquished in the first. All elasticity of the heart; all its freshness, its wild joy. It becomes cold

and weary, and more fit to contend with your's. This then is a true picture. Believe me, you have overstretched the mark; you have outwitted yourself. Abandoning the path of true feeling, you are but a sorry adept in the wily intercourse of stratagems. They have failed you. I told you vanity was your ruling characteristic; here you have shown it: Here is the rock upon which you have shipwrecked your hopes. Your springes were set, but too plainly. You were not sufficiently advanced to threaten. Your bluster proves you a very bully, never to be feared. I will have my terms now, an unconditional surrender of my letters. I am neither reduced to accept even in the particular of a capitulation, nor you to demand one. Confess, then, that vanity has marred greater projects than your head is capable of conceiving. I have you on the hip now. You are vexed, and lost your vantage ground; for you will now discover, that you are forced to capitulate with me, even for my friendship. You have not that volatility of spirits, that, like a butterfly, can flit from flower to flower. Your shyness—your sloth, remove all rivals far away. You have made your spring like the tiger; and, having missed your aim, you must slink away

abashed. Look into your conscience, and ask, has your conduct been honest? Look into my penetration of it, and ask yourself if it has been wise. You have attempted an enterprise the most difficult in the scope of love—a single man to engage the love of a youthful widow without marriage. Here there can be no excuse, but her infatuation. How is she to be charmed into such a state? By clumsy artifice, by mockery and insult, before she had laid aside half her prudence. The pretension of a lover here is divested of all disinterestedness. Here is a great lee-way to make up; for we are caught by generosity, and here it is thrown overboard. You know now the terms. Next post must bring the unconditional surrender: it will then be for me to dictate our future position.

B. BELMONT.



SIR A. ATHERSTONE TO MRS. BELMONT.

London, June 5th.

OH! let me curse my stars, my fortune, and my fate! Your will is done. This packet proves my honesty. Recall your former thoughts: believe not my words: wretched infatuation! How could I have written them? *I am true.* No, my clumsy raillery has brought this on me. You have not seen through my purpose, but misconceived my meaning. I confess your superiority of wit. Fool to strive to compete with it: it was but a trial of skill at best. Oh! take not what has passed to heart!—think me not dishonest. You have evidence that I have not power to deceive. Think me not that vain fool, who has pretensions where he feels he has no power. I have complied with your terms; and here I remain, unalterably remain until a further order changes my position. Is obedience proof of submission? And is submission proof of repentance? Has not a woman's breast that highest attribute of heaven?—joy over the repentant sinner! Will you belie your nature and withhold it now? Take these few sincere words, they are the earnest of the future.*

A. ATHERSTONE.

* All her letters were enclosed within one.

ROSALINE TO CLORINDA.

Bath, December 6th.

I AM anxiously waiting to hear from you. Your position requires the utmost prudence. Your happiness, nay, your existence is, as it were, wrapt up in the political circumstances of your country. All I can wish you is, in the words of our criminal trials, “may God grant you and Rinaldo a good deliverance.” Yet how unphilosophical is this! Am I farther out of the reach of the inexorable fates than you? Appearances may be delusive. Who knows what trials we both may have? How many crosses, as the methodists say, may befall us? and which of us shall surmount them?—we cannot see the invisible hand that leads us blindfold. A Scottish lassie once said to me, “We may ken what happened yesterday, but cannot ken what may happen to-morrow.” Aristotle, and all your learned sages down to the present day, did you ever say a wiser thing, or make a more profound remark—one pregnant with more truth and pith, and less vanity than this? This is, indeed, acknowledging a Supreme Power, and is worth all the

fulsome quackery with which that supreme power is addressed. It is my vanity, Clorinda, that makes me give you advice. I give advice, indeed! Have the Fates whispered me what direction to take? have they let me out of my prison house to take any direction at all? The *Parcæ*, forsooth; those who spare; fine irony of the ancients; how happy are those who are led blindfold, whose seared eyes see not whither they are going, or rather know not whither they are led; for they are frisking in a fool's paradise. Yet I flutter like a bird in a cage, and drown my sorrow by warbling my eternal melancholy note. But why call it sorrow, because I am clear sighted? I see we cannot help ourselves;—precious babes! we are still in leading-strings, and our grim nurses twitch and lift us about, and snap our necks in two at last. Oh! that they may not break our hearts first! for that is cruel indeed. Is my heart first to be broken, and then quenched for ever? Oh! this is the grand secret. It has no reliance but in pure intelligence, that is, in pure idealism, that is in justice absolute—the sublimest reach of thought. Yet, God and Immortality, you rest in pure idealism; we need not search for you in nature, that is known to us by our senses, and

you come not into the region of sense. How I like to run to the end of my tether, to be perpetually getting to the termination of my scope, to ask, will the vital spark stop here, or will it leap over time and space, and twinkle in eternity? But how? ay, how is it here? can we tell? have we found it out? what do we know? As to these things, we are perpetually in a waking dream. Where is the world? ay, the universal world? In our own bosom. Where do we wander most? In our own closet. When do we see most clear? When we shut our eyes. We run about the globe, but then we are checked and imprisoned every instant by circumstances. In our closet we soar far and high, without stay or stop. Our visual organs are unconfined. We scan eternity, and on every side scope immeasurable, that is, no time, no space; then no cause, no effect; because here is no substance, no accident. Here then is the supreme and eternal will absolute. In my mind's eagle-eye, I dare contemplate him. But, Clorinda, this is a high and haughty flight, for here viewing the Eternal, I become kindred to him in this sublime abstraction. Away petty passions—petty fears! What is fear, ignorance, dulness, that feels not the invi-

sible hand that leads us? Poor timid, cringing mortals!—how you go, creeping and bewailing and croaking about, bleating like sheep. Now I am ashamed of my sorrow; it has surprised me in a feeble, dreaming moment. I looked upon my feet, I thought I could walk; upon my hands, I thought I could direct them. Then I saw not the invisible hand that led me. Now the invisible has become visible. Then I agree with our famous preacher; aye, when he is general, but not when he is particular. So do I agree with the rabbi, with the mufti, and with the priestesses of the sun too. Let them be general, I am with them; let them be particular, I despise them. They make conversations, indeed! with whom? With pure intelligence, with heaven, with hell. Where is heaven and hell? In our own heart; no where else. Fly through the eternal range of the eternal starry canopy; go high, go low; go right, go left; for ever you carry with you heaven and hell; for the divine nature clings to you. If you follow me, Clorinda, I will lead you an intellectual dance. For what is life?—a craving or a surfeit. What is mankind?—brutes that wallow in the senses, or visionaries that dream in air; realism and idealism absolute; and life is the pendulum of our

clock, and we are wound up for some sixty and seventy years, and then our wheels decay, and then it stops, and we mourn and howl when it is about to stop. Little souls! they cannot leave behind them the tinsel baubles and gew-gaws with which their clock was adorned. But go they must to the foul charnel-house at last. Nor do they know when. With me that is not the worst, for I fear it not. Nor hope nor fear touch me there; for hope and fear belong to the senses, and stop in the charnel-house with them. Pure intelligence, which then may escape, knows nor hope nor fear. Clorinda, you live more in the senses than I do; your blood is hot and quick, so it obscures the vision of your mind; so you are tossed between hope and fear. My atmosphere is more ideal, where hope and fear have less controul, where pride expels vanity. Adieu. In the words of Hamlet's mother, "I sprinkle cool patience on you."

ROSALINE.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Bath, January 17th.

I WAS yesterday, dear Clorinda, in one of my mystical, melancholy, metaphysical moods, that I love so much to indulge in, and which stamp, from the highest to the lowest, the character of the English people. Witness the grave-digger in Hamlet, which forms so much the strongest part of their character, which has given them the advantage, in most things, over other nations, and which will prevent them from ever becoming slaves, or from ever being exposed to a sort of community of vices, though it may sprinkle among them occasional crimes. This is the main cause of the diversity of our characters; the reason why you find in England, Ireland and Scotland the *best* and the *worst* men in the world. But I will moralize no more with you. A people who moralize, go great lengths in the play of the passions; it is difficult to enslave them. A people who follow doctrinal authority are already enslaved—they seldom fall into such great crimes, for that requires strength of mind, but solace themselves in petty

vices. My aunt pleases me more since she has fallen into some affliction, because it has brought out more the lights and shades of her character: the picture is more striking. She has had a desperate quarrel with Sir Arthur; and for three days her pretty soft eyes have twinkled through floods of tears; her volubility has been abated, and her speech contracted more to the range of her ideas. In short, she is an altered person. It is only in the rubs of life that we show what we are made of, as sailors prove their skill and courage in storms. Your fair-weather people, who look on perpetual sunshine, are an insipid race. Are they a happy race? I doubt it. Are our slumbers sweet when we go to bed surfeited? I say a little transient sorrow becomes Barbara; it is so unusual with her, it gives a pretty childish innocence to her manner. Her parts are quick, and now and then she does not want strength of expression. She is a gay jocund beauty, and very graceful, and perfectly understands the drapery of dress, all which render her very interesting. Her mind is very pure, though her volubility and her vanity often bring her to the brink of a precipice. But even here she has security. A passion will never take possession of her heart, and master her soul.

These women are like the *will o' the wisp* which we have read of so much in our childish days in English fables, they twinkle and glimmer, and then disappear, then appear again, to lead the men a weary dance; or a prettier comparison would be to your own Italian fire-flies, that light up your delicious nights with their brilliant sparkling; we strive to catch them, we grasp them in our hand; what are they then? or where are they? Nought. The strongest minds are the truest hearted—strong minds alone love truly. Clorinda, therefore, I fear, poor girl, for your happiness, for you are linked to desperate fortunes and desperate purposes, and surrounded by desperate circumstances. This, however, is the first misfortune that my aunt has had. I pass over, not uncharitably I hope, the loss of her *husband*; for I fancy that event did not make much impression on her. Indeed, my dear friend, this, in general, is the great scandal of our sex, and has caused us to be often underrated by men. My feeling is, that widows recover much sooner than widowers; the loss of a wife causes a desolation in a man's heart, that, if he be worth any thing, he can hardly replace; he loses at worst his property, at best, his mistress, often a friend, always

a companion, sometimes a real partner. These losses are great. A wife, you will say, loses all these also. But she views them in another light. I own, when she is a *mistress*, her loss is great indeed. But the slight difference is, that *she* is the property. She does not possess it. A little fluttering liberty comes and wipes her eyes. But I like not to dwell on these subjects. It is taking too great a liberty with the awful fates, I never trench on their ground. When I speak of them, I whisper softly, that they may not overhear me, and pounce down upon me with some cruel destiny.

But to return to Mrs. Barbara.

There is a character in one of Congreve's plays that gives an excellent idea of her manner, though not of her mind. A sort of manner that encourages men; then her mind sets her right again, and they are repudiated. It is the scene between Foible and Lady Wishfort. Lady Wishfort says: "But art thou sure that Sir Rowland will not fail to come, or will he not fail, when he does come? Will he be importunate, Foible, and push? For if he should not be importunate, I shall never break decorum. I shall die with confusion; or, if I am forced to advance—Oh! no. I can never advance. I shall swoon if he should expect ad-

vances. No, I hope Sir Rowland is better bred than to put a lady to the necessity of breaking her forms. I won't be too coy neither—I won't give him despair—but a little disdain is not amiss, a little scorn is alluring.”

“Foible.—A little scorn becomes your ladyship.”

“Lady.—Yes, but tenderness becomes me best. A sort of a dyingness. You see that picture has a sort of—ha! Foible, a swimmingness in the eyes—Yes, I'll look so—My niece affects it, but she wants features.” She concludes afterwards by declaring that she has a mortal terror against offending against decorum. This is her picture. As I am not in her confidence, I know not what she writes; but I think she could write with more energy than she could speak: for her very exact breeding and polished manners would, even in the storm of an altercation, neutralize much of the force of her sentiments, and appease her indignation. Indeed I have always heard that England is much the country of decorums; offend them not, and any thing else is allowed. I fear this will lead ultimately to a dreadful hypocrisy. The methodists and saints have introduced the religion of outward decorum; which is said to cover over a

horrid licentiousness among them. Of all vices, hypocrisy is the most contemptible; and the wretched, deluded, and deluding people, as the great Marquis of Montrose called them, strive all they can to introduce this dangerous plant into England, which is so foreign to its natural growth. I think no quarter should be given them; they should be considered as poisoners of every manly sentiment and every virtuous feeling; and be spurned as a poor, mean, sneaking, quibbling, contemptible set. For the most mischievous leaven that can fret and worry the happiness of mankind, is the leaven of religious fanaticism. Let it ever creep into a family, and then, farewell all comfort; nay, justice and fair dealing. At length it expels even common honesty. To introduce it, is to introduce disorder instead of order—persecution instead of charity—to overturn both the rules of practical and theoretical reason. In fine, to reverse our being. And when we feel that the greater number of fanatics are base hypocrites, that they are seeking their own advantage, we cannot but wish to see such vermin exterminated. I hope my aunt will not be infected by them. She is too young and handsome yet, and too gay; but a few more disappointments, a little more, aye

other belles springing up in her place, and she may retreat upon methodism, and finish as great a ranter as any of the *fancy*, as they are called in Ireland; which country seems destined to be the shuttlecock, that is, to fly perpetually between the two battledores of a kindred fanaticism. For you know I have often read to you our inimitable Swift's Tale of a Tub; and there, he says, that Lord Petre was frequently mistaken for Jack. But if I can have any influence over my aunt, I will take especial care that she falls not ill of that sad distemper. Swift says, "that religion is the spleen of the soul:" a strong expression truly. He must have meant the *fancy* then, for in general it sits easy enough upon mankind, until they want to use it as an engine either of despotism or corruption. With my aunt it would be spleen and nothing else, arising from disappointment. She seems to have set her heart upon catching that of Sir Arthur. I think she has a deeper reach than he has, and then she will probably succeed, as they both appear to me to be playing a game. You and I, thank our stars, are more simple, and scorn to play any such game. Indeed all your schemers are persons of a middling sort of understanding. I should have but

a poor opinion of a man who trifled away his time in pursuing a hopeless passion. Such trifling indeed ruins the dignity of real love. We never read of it in any great tragedy or epic: the best subject for even the drama of real life is when the passion is at once reciprocal, when inferior objects intervene to prevent its accomplishment, but not resting on the waywardness of the parties, just as your's is now, you honest girl; and I must say of the women of Italy, they are not coquets; whatever they are, they are true to this passion. I trust this may tend to amuse you. In the mean time, believe me.

ROSALINE.

CLORINDA TO ROSALINE.

Florence, December 20th.

THINK only, my dearest friend, whither my destiny is hurrying on.—Think upon the perils with which I am surrounded. View me quitting the easy, nay, luxurious path of ordinary life, under splendid circumstances, to involve myself in fortunes that may destroy my comfort, break my heart, and wreck my hopes. Yet “I am led blindfold by an invisible hand.” I am at open war with my mother, and what is worse, in secret war with the malignant priest, her confessor. I have boldly resisted my intended’s hand, strengthened by your arguments and my own feelings; I have declared that they shall drag me only by force to the altar, and there I will protest both to God and man. I have told the Sposo, it was mean and base in him to try to force a woman, contrary to her consent, to marry by the authority of her parents; that it would be the worst species of violation on his part, and the worst species of prostitution on mine. And I have secretly advised him, as he is such an ultra, to go to beloved Turkey; beloved, I mean, by your social order

people, and there buy a wife in the slave-market. My mother, instigated by that viper the Abbatè, talks of sending me up the Val d'Arno, to the Hermitage,* then to a convent. But my father would not hear of it, and has given me all the Carnival to decide. Unlike other Florentine young ladies, I am to have an unusual degree of liberty, but as I shall always be in mask, it will not be known; and they have tried to gain me with splendid trinkets, as if a piece of shining charcoal, which Pietro tells me a diamond is, will alter my way of thinking. No, Rosaline, I will die first. What does a woman exist for, except it be not to be forced in her inclinations? I can remain single. I can give myself up to literature, to scientific pursuits, to good offices, to country amusements. But two things I had rather die than submit to—To have a husband forced upon me—or become a nun. And what is the cause of so many scandalous marriages and unfaithful wives in Italy, in Spain, and old France, but on account of the terrible alternative, a husband or a convent—prostitution or prison? Oh! heavens! and how should it be otherwise! That children should

* A villa of the Marquis di Torri.

be brought up slaves, when these are the happy auspices under which they are born? Neglected, or considered as playthings by their mothers—their tempers consequently ruined, educated by that vermin called priests, fashioned for ignorance and despotism, taught falsehood instead of truth, handed over to the police if they breathe one manly thought, eager to cringe at court, and hiding their real chains by the trumpery gew-gaws of decorations. Excuse me, Rosaline, if I have exhaled Rinaldo's sentiments till they become my own, and that I breathe them to you again—

The only book that interests me now is *Clarissa Harlowe*; formerly I gaped and yawned at the very sight of it. I was obliged to praise it for fashion's sake; now I devour it. Instead of her wicked sister Bella and her atrocious brother, I have my charming Abbate and an odious old French emigrant R * *, who is always croaking through his snuff-distended nostrils. This contemptible wretch sneaks and pays his court to every one in the house, only to betray them. He is the fomentor of all mischief and dissensions. I have heard your father say that England was full of them, and that their ingratitude is now signal.

That I could pardon, were it not for the confusion that they must create in every family where they are admitted, for their system is spying and lying; the one a consequence of the other. I am warm, excuse me, Rinaldo's life may be in jeopardy. I have some of your melancholy anticipations.

I am calmer now. A flood of tears, that has blotted the paper, has eased my bursting heart. It is a frightful thing for a young girl like me, even to resist my parent's wishes and the habits of my country; this enough would upset me, without every other alarming chance that threatens my happiness. But why did I live with you six years, Rosaline? You have been my guide, my instructress. From your lips dropped godlike truths, that have given me a new existence. And do they think that they now will be able to put me under the yoke of the Abbate again? Oh, I hear some one coming. They are calling me. May that unknown Supreme Power, whatever it is, whomsoever he is that you treat of in such general terms—may it that gave me life, guide and protect me through that life, according to my wishes, seeing how pure my heart is!

Oh! is it a crime to love? Is that love the sacred mantle that envelopes the moral being of a

woman, that supports her through life, that protects her from the chilling blasts of envy, hatred, malice, and detraction? Or is it not sometimes—I shudder at the notion—the poisoned shirt of Nessus, that the monster treacherously gave to Dejanira for the destruction of Hercules—that envenoms her existence when not required? Is the chilling frost of forms to nip it in its beautiful and healthful blossom? This divine passion that transports us into a sphere of middle existence betwixt heaven and earth. Oh! fortune! Fortune, like Aurora, open with thy rosy fingers the bright morning of a joyous life for me; strew flowers in my path. I will worship thee; I will sacrifice my scruples upon thy altars.

Adieu, I can no more,

LA CLORINDA.

MAJOR DE VERE TO ROSALINE.

January 6th.

So, you mad girl, what a match you have refused! But you know best. Never shall thy poor old father counteract thee. I have but a

short time to crawl about, and thou shalt be the queen of my affections. Go thy ways for a wayward brat. Thou mayest have vagaries in thy brain, which I cannot reach, but thine heart will always keep thee true. But I grow childish and chatter impertinence—true hearts indeed now-a-days! where are they to be found? Once on a time they clustered like grapes in England, until they well nigh snapped the stem of the tree. Hypocrisy! hypocrisy is now the order of the day. Old hearts, old books, old good faith, aye, even old plays, are all thrown upon the shelf with all their wit and true humour, and mawkish trash is substituted. But vice is grown dainty, forsooth, and squeamish as she becomes ripe and prurient. She won't bear to hear herself joked with, or named even. Lips are pinched and pursed up, while eyes are gloating. Our novels, too, spoil history and fiction both, by mixing them up together, and put us to sleep with their dull jumble. We have copious wine and water draughts of these that suit a French palate better than a British stomach. We have abundance of political writers and economists, I think they call them, who have *economised* us out of our estates. These jack-o'-lanterns, these will-o'-the-wisps, who frisk

before our benighted wits and plunge us into the inextricable quagmire of their own dulness. We have churches without congregations; laws without justice; parliament without representatives—I will not go any farther.—Sentimental psalm-singing, and a free grace to lie, cheat, and sin in private with a long-drawn pharisaical visage, bawl about liberty and support tyranny. These are modern manners. But, young hussy, you and your aunt are rivals. Egad; so, so, she will not catch Sir Arthur. A coquet is every man's game, particularly if a widow. A young widow is as wanton as an old maid is spiteful—She plays fast and loose—likes the flirtation well, but fears the drawing tight of the noose. She has felt it once. Like a young colt, half broken, and then turned out to grass, she is difficult to catch again. Aye, indeed, wantonness comes as naturally to a young widow as a bribe does to an elector—a job to a Member of Parliament, or the love of power to a churchman—or to punish the man and not the offence to a judge, or a place to a wrangling, bawling patriot lawyer; aye, as natural as it is for an apostate to hang his former associates and rise to an infamous eminence on their gibbet, on which he himself ought to have swung.

Well! well! things must be as they are, I suppose. We run in a circle, and then turn about and run back again. So things may come back after all. Honesty in our hearts and wit on our tongues. A fig for your snivelling hypocrisy. My toast shall ever be—Honest hearts! Though I fear if we would get drunk in drinking them individually now, it must be in *brandy*, they are so rare! But thou art an honest girl! and though it would have pleased me to have seen thee allied to wealth, yet it seems wealth and our family have sworn an eternal divorce. Yet that speaks for our wits. Two classes only are the legitimate allies of wealth—your knave and your dull jack-ass. The first attracts all to himself. The second keeps all by himself; for he has neither the spirit nor the wit to spend. So goes the world. We cannot have all: therefore I am reconciled.

God bless you, child.

AUBREY DE VERE.

PIETRO PERRUVINI TO RINALDO, COUNT DE ROCCA
ST. CACCIANO.

Bologna, January 20th.

My Dear and Excellent Friend,

THIS letter will be delivered to you by a safe hand, for we must still lie quiet in our hiding places, like mice; for before every hole is a watchful cat, that intercepts us if we take a stride. Nothing can exceed the intense activity of the police, excepting the universal and intense hatred of the galling yoke that we groan under. Indeed one of the agents of the police avowed to me the other day, so universal is the detestation of the present political system, that it is only maintained by the correct intelligence of our spies—the activity of our police, and the terror of our dungeons—of these latter you are aware that there are three sorts—the *carcere semplice*; the *carcere duro*; and the *carcere durissimo*. The last is the modern refinement of condemning state prisoners to death. The prisoner is chained down; and cold, damp, vexations, bad and insufficient provisions—despair, sometimes torture, finish him. Some last one or two, or three months, more or

less. This *wise* expedient prevents the scandal of a public execution, and strikes more terror, because he may be transferred to this cell, without any trial, and under pretence of forcing him to a confession; for many die in this manner, who would be even acquitted by hired or corrupt judges, who try in secret, as is the custom, for against most there is not a shadow of ground of accusation, except it be the shadows of the fears of our cruel oppressors. But shadows have more fears for the cruel (who are always cowardly) than realities. Witness the fear of ghosts, or of hell. Therefore the most innocent, because they may be men of wisdom, and probity, and discretion, are the first suspected, and the first to expiate the sins of their virtue, for the high treason of making the galling contrast between those virtues, and the vices of their oppressors, visible by their correct mode of life. The wicked, in every age, cling to arbitrary power; for it is the only mode by which they can rise to riches and distinctions. A good man, unless he be a fool, and then made a stalking-horse, is ever unwelcome to any arbitrary government; but a rogue is always acceptable, for he will run into any measures. The most efficient agents of police are

the most cowardly, because their fears make them vigilant, and their cowardice causes them to be cruel. Hence, after a country is conquered, it is always delivered up to the government of the basest and the most malignant and cowardly knaves that can be found. Many of the clergy, individually, are excellent, and think well, and have not forgotten the ties of humanity in the ties of the priesthood; but, collectively, they have what the French term the *esprit de corps*, and they cling to power, their own power, if they could safely keep it superior or independent of the civil power; if not, they call in the civil power to aid them, and *vice versâ*. Then they lose sight of justice and humanity: and it is strange to see how great an affinity there is then between them; those of the most opposite sects, who would have each other burnt at the stake, will all join, if the general order is touched, to burn all the country. Thus, at this instant, they play fast and loose. What is most to be feared is, that the Jesuits, who are now re-established, will again get possession of the education of youth: then the evil is irremediable. They are so clever!—understand the human mind so perfectly!—draw out its power so completely! But then they give it their own in-

fernal direction. And surely what would the blind supporters of authority have? Are they fools or knaves, if they desire to be victims of their detested system, or its dupes, or do they deserve to profit by it? What is authority? Analyse it. It is merely law, or the administration of law, for the well-being of a community; but these wretches convert it into an engine of base gain for the few. The secret is, that under pretence of it, they desire to plunder and regulate the mass of mankind. What an insolent paradox is *arbitrary government*! What brutish beasts men are to submit to it! Arbitrary government, indeed! that is, many millions of men bending the knee to Baal; worshipping their own shame—their own dishonour; pouring forth before the altar of Baal their wealth, the product of their industry, to obtain—what? Insult—insult—insult. And if they question their own base and cowardly folly, and strive to get rid of it, then come dungeons—halters—and extermination by the armed banditti in Baal's service, whom the wretches pay to murder themselves. Oh! enlightened age! Oh! divine wisdom! Says Boileau:—

“ De Pekin à Paris, de Paris à Rome,

“ Le plus sot animal, à mon avis, c'est l'homme.”

Yes indeed this is true; from Paris to Peking, from Peking to Rome, the most foolish animal is, indeed, man—stupid, base man! the sport of a handful of cowardly tyrants, who individually would not dare to stand before hardly one man of the millions they trample upon in the mass.

I write this for your government; but our greatest hope is, that the despots will be jealous of the power of the church, and then that collision will neutralize the insanity of the malignity of both. There is another hope, that fanaticism will caricature itself, and then the result will be ridicule and indifference, the ultimate consequences. Toleration is, of all remedies, the best; because it leads to indifference: and then the wind or storm of controversy can no longer puff up or fan the flames of fanaticism. Europe seems, at this moment, big with the seeds of combustion: it seems, the epoch is fast approaching of a new direction of the human mind: it is the struggle between light and darkness—night and day—joy or misery—virtue or vice—knowledge or ignorance. This great cause, like all great causes, can never come to pass without much individual misery, and many glorious martyrs; and we must all make up our minds to bear with heroic

firmness, our martyrdom. I have but half the cause for exertion that you have. I am colder, I own, and despise fame more than you do, as an empty sound: but still I am doomed to suffer, for there is something delightful to think that we have done our duty, at the expense of great personal sacrifice: and what sacrifice can there be so noble as that of our life for the good of others? I think we shall ultimately have the advantage, because our party is in earnest; because we feel and think that we are right. The others are not truly in earnest, because they know that selfishness is their only object. So the contest resolves itself into selfishness against disinterestedness; that is to say, of vice against virtue. Adieu; be prudent, yet bold—be cautious, yet determined.

PIETRO.

RINALDO TO PIETRO PERRUVINI.

Florence, December 25th.

I HAVE received yours from Bologna, and I return this by the same safe hand. It is of the utmost importance to our friends in the quarter where you now are, that they should be rightly and fully informed of all that passed in La Romagna, up to the period of the breaking up of our lodge. We had vainly conceived that the soundest heads and the truest hearts had been firmly united. But the most critical of all political operations was destined to be wrecked by the same means as most conspiracies have been dissolved by. We are none of us without our suspicions, which however we dare not even breathe one to another. This is the most heart-rending circumstance of the most exalted, the most difficult and the most daring enterprize that can excite human nature. A conspiracy to obtain good government, to overthrow bad—comes fully under that description. Its manifold difficulties and dangers enhance its glory. The successful actors in it have achieved the most sublime of all human destinies. Look throughout the page of history,

and see how many have failed, and how few have succeeded; and then contemplate the amazing glory, the dazzling fame, that belongs to them who succeed—The everlasting gratitude of the best of mankind await upon their desperate, hazardous temerity. No doubt but that they should have been sanctified in all eyes.—If they persist, they are the real martyrs—They are not martyrs for shadows, but for realities. Now that I contemplate the scenes in which I have been engaged during the last year, my mind is perfectly astonished at the recollection; yet how much more have we yet to go through! Yet nothing like conspiring to whet and invigorate the understanding. Nothing makes men so wary and so cautious—Nothing gives them so sharp an insight into character, or causes them so justly to appreciate merit and direct it—The fearful rocks, quicksands, shoals, with which we are surrounded in the perilous navigation of this awful sea; the storms which we ourselves are brewing, place our being in a state of excitement more than human power can bear. What a close parallel can be maintained between a conspirator and a devotee! The first strives for earthly regeneration, the second for heavenly. The conspirator risks his

existence, that of his family, disinterestedly, for the happiness of all around him. His eternity is the fame which he shall have acquired, and which imperishable shall descend to the latest posterity, wherein he shall eclipse the renown of conquerors; for who glories not more in the fame of Brutus than of Cæsar? Ask every rational being, before their fine and honest impressions of virtue are corrupted by selfishness, and you will see their countenance glow, their breast swell, and their eye sparkle at the bare mention of the name of the ever glorious Brutus. His one God-like stroke in the heart of the tyrant transcended in glory all Cæsar's victories. The martyr is burnt at the stake for his opinions. The patriot perishes more ostentatiously on the scaffold, or more gloriously, because more painfully, in a condemned dungeon. Both prove their devotion, their duty. Devotion and duty, two most sacred words, the two crutches upon which the most shattered and enfeebled frame may be supported. Were I, like you, Pietro, to have the instruction of youth, these are the two holy spells that I would engrave in their hearts. They are spells that chase away all death's terrors. Duty and devotion! Hear, ye noble youths; breathe these sacred sounds

as your morning and evening orisons, and ask your noble hearts ever to interpret them. Yes, our hearts are the only true interpreters of them. Their magic is a talisman against all fear, because against all selfishness. Ah! Pietro; but we must have no flinchers. Yet base alloy will ever be mixed up in pure metal. So, I fear, has it been with us. Take then the following narrative:—

“The military fire, the chivalrous sentiments of Barbantio, were ever for precipitating measures. His warm and sanguine temper, and proud courage, made him see no difficulties; nor could any danger deter him. Accustomed to military command, he expected to find organization and obedience everywhere; and he calculated only the seizure of certain points, precisely in the same manner as if he had been with an army. He calculated not upon the diverging of all the passions of the human heart upon various points; he was not aware of the whole circle of affections which were to be put into action—the good and the bad—those that excite—those that draw back. He calculated not on truth and falsehood, courage and cowardice, in the abstract, and how these qualities shift and fly from one breast to another, and re-appear, and re-occupy the same breast by

turns. Nor had he a foresight upon the concurrent drift of general events, all of which modify and change our individual resolutions. Lastly, the nobleness of his soul made it impossible for him to conceive treason. In fine, Barbantio was fitter for the field than for the cabinet; to execute, rather than to deliberate.

Superior to him in intelligence, though inferior in enterprize, in greatness of soul, came next Blandino. More supple, more adroit, endowed with the most rare and splendid eloquence, he unfortunately had been bred a lawyer, which attached him to forms. He saw all principle in forms, and all reason in a technical arrangement. An excellent husband, an incomparable father, surrounded with all the tenderness of life, he shuddered at the necessary plans for carrying our great purpose into execution. His love of liberty, which he had imbibed from the classics, in which he is a great proficient—his eloquence at the bar, brought Cicero perpetually before his eyes; and he would have been more fitted to have consummated a scheme of liberty, than to have established it. For here, my dear Pietro, let me venture to affirm, that the spirit of liberty, which constitutes a perfect conspirator, is not of

the bland or amiable kind; it is founded on a fierce love of independence—on a haughty pride, conscious of its own great power—in disdain of others, contempt of life—if life cannot coincide with our wishes to the utmost—and on an invincible repugnance to all the little low arts of government. Hence a conspirator of that class, if he finds not afterwards the people whom he has emancipated worthy of that emancipation, and then cling round him like so many briars, that contempt of others, which first excited him to throw off the yoke, may cause him to fix another yoke upon the necks of those whom he has delivered, though it will be tempered with justice. Indeed he will excuse himself by asserting, that there is no tyranny in directing men, and forcing them in a good direction. Blandino, therefore, often counteracted the more desperate councils, for which I was an advocate, and which Barbantio always seconded. Besides, he had always a compromise in his eye. This is like a sailor having a port under his lee. But the true conspirator should look but to two contingencies—success or death. In that case, parties would succeed much more frequently than they do now. Richard the Third says, in Shakspeare, “ Slave, I have set

my life upon the hazard of a die, and I *will* stand the cast." This sentence should be engraven on the hearts of all those who strive to become the deliverers of their country: the glorious destroyers of tyrants and usurpers. The others were men of less note, but many of them of stern and rugged tempers and flinty hearts, well fitted to such desperate purposes. I gained an invincible ascendancy, because I was more metaphysical than the rest, dealt more in generals—consequently knew the road better into the inmost recesses of the human heart; though I could not compete with either of the other two I have mentioned, whether in respect to eloquence, or that commanding brilliant, chivalrous overflow of sentiment. But I seldom failed of worming myself into a corner of their hearts, and then seizing that lever, I roused up their whole body and soul. But looking narrowly to success, and recommending the means of obtaining it positively, I alarmed them often in clashing with their prejudices; for your metaphysicians look to the end, and not to the means. There was too much good logic in my reasonings, as to success. I prescribed to them the pill, but I did not condescend to gild it. The draught was simple, bitter as gall, and un-

compounded with honey. In the prescription, all admitted me to be a skilful physician, but an unpleasant apothecary. Then my reply was, a *conspiracy* is *conspiracy*. What is our object? the most glorious in human life, to deliver our oppressed and groaning country. The minor is contained in the major; therefore, the means whereby this is to be accomplished, are contained within the end. We only deceive ourselves by following forms. It is well for them, who are already in power, to follow forms. They can murder legally, and put up prayers for such murder. We cannot. We have the forms against us. Success will be the test if we are fortunate—The means will be forgotten or overwhelmed by that success. If, on the contrary, we fail; one of the penalties of our temerity is the obloquy which must be necessarily thrown upon our character—But success will make our reputation whole.

Without being poetic or wishing to write a romance, I could describe to you the many sleepless nights that I have passed in agonizing thought after the faction had left me; for the meetings were usually held at my house. Two grand apprehensions disturbed my rest: the fear of being betrayed by one of our own party, and the sus-

picion that we should not be supported by the fanatical people. For had we had the priests on our side, no doubt then of our success. For priests are perpetual conspirators; that is, they serve an imperium in imperio, and are only auxiliaries of the government. Most efficient, I grant. But their mysterious connexion with their parishioners, being the depositaries and channels of mystic or spiritual power, necessarily give them an influence that nothing can counteract. In this they are diametrically working against us, and we have only the good wishes of a few of the lower ones, whom poverty or ambition, or indifference towards the priesthood, may induce to join our side. I have carefully examined the History of Factions, and I find what a deep part priests play, either for or against them. Sometimes one religion is oppressed by another, and though the more liberal religion is uppermost, yet it becomes illiberal; and the illiberal one that is oppressed, becomes the most liberal. So that, so far from producing peace and concord, religions are the very hot-beds of turbulence and faction. I have often wondered at the shortsightedness of princes who encouraged them so much as if to have a double rank of magistrates—The temporal ma-

gistrates in the foreground, and the spiritual magistrates in the back ground. One in the first line, and the other in the second line. Princes, by this means, think that their power is more secured, and their authority more readily enforced. But they recollect not that they are nourishing the seeds of the dissolution of their own power. For instance, wherein lies the greatest power? The civil magistrate condemns a man to death—He is carried to the place of execution. This is terrible! It is striking and awful! And yet the spectators know that a man *must* die; and this ordinary event is soon forgotten. But the spiritual magistrate mounts up beside the culprit—He exhorts him, and he seems on that occasion to hold the keys of paradise; he offers the culprit heaven. Here then is a power much greater than the civil magistrate can exert, much greater than that of the prince, inasmuch as eternity is longer than time. What power can we offer to counteract this? The people may groan under the most debasing slavery; they may be treated worse than the beasts of the field. The worse they are treated, the greater their chance of everlasting happiness is then perpetually dinned into their ear by the priesthood. Nay,

the instant a person is executed, do not the crowd loudly exclaim: "All' ora in paradiso."* The friars encourage this. So that the inference is, that a culprit who has been guilty of the blackest crimes, if he be executed, has the best chance of rewards. How can we resist this? By holding the keys of heaven, the priests can lock the padlock of the fetters on earth. How can we overcome divine right? and when they choose, they leave no debtor side to the book, because they can give a receipt in full for all crimes. The fact is, that, by such a system, a man is governed by his hopes and fears; that is, by the most base and selfish motives. The object, then, of all mystical systems, however modified, is to enslave and degrade us. It is curious, however, to observe, how little religion ultraroyalists have. Authority, authority is all they look at. Religion is with them a secondary consideration, only so far as it supports blindly authority. Obedience is the first of virtues, and servility the height of wisdom. The whole scheme between God, kings, and men, is thus cemented by selfishness. The secret is, how to elicit as much obedience from the mass of mankind as possible, in

* "Now he is in paradise."

order to plunder them at their ease, and with impunity. Hence, with these ultras morality is as *zero*, whilst superstition (an admirable method of authority) is as *one hundred*. Patience, obedience, ' and submission—Submission, obedience, and patience, is the eternal chorus of their song. We are to sit patiently in the front of the theatre, and not to presume to look behind the scenes, and see all the ropes and pullies—the worn out scenes, tattered and bespattered, the clumsy carpenters that patch them up. Nor can we well distinguish, with the glare of lights, the several false stones which bedeck the actors: we take them, from the illusions of our sight, for real. We think sentiments flow from the hearts of kings and queens, heroes and heroines, when they are only got by rote, or suggested by the hasty prompter; thus full grown babies are amused with the drama of politics; sometimes a tragedy—comedy; sometimes a farce. I look, therefore, to the safeguards of liberty, and not to the form of government. There may be more tyranny in a nominal republic, than in a monarchy. What is it to me that the chief of the state is called President, or Consul, or King, or Emperor? These are mere forms that wise men regard little, and that fools only ad-

mire. The checks and safeguards against man's odious love of power is what I consider. Indeed, mankind appear to me to exemplify the fable of the dog crossing the water with a piece of meat in his mouth, which he drops in order to grasp at the shadow; and these shadows fix their destiny here on earth. This was our greatest difficulty. Few men examine, or this would not be the case, and the mysteriousness of spiritual power makes it greater than temporal. Let princes beware. They had better govern by temporal laws. In a catholic country, the confessional is a great bar to conspiracy, unless the priests are the conspirators; then it does not signify. But if it be the interest of the Church to support the existing tyranny, and any rash conspirator goes to confession, the whole is blown. For, although the priests vapour much about the sacredness of the confessional, ask any minister of state, or council of any catholic country, what use they have not made of it? Hints may be given indirectly. This alone has supported the Church for so many ages. For it is their high secret police; for the ultimate aim and end of all positive religions are temporal power. Hobbes, in his great work of the Kingdom of Darkness,

(which every one, who wishes to be rightly informed upon these subjects, should read,) says, “that, by means of the confessional, they (the “Church) know every one’s secrets, whilst no one “knows theirs.” He concludes with a most eloquent and powerful comparison between the priests and the kingdom of the fairies, which I shall some day communicate to you. Another impediment to our hopes are the formalists among the liberals; that is, the conceited part of them. They consist of the pragmatistical part,—the learned, the half learned, and the sentimental conspirators—those who wish to achieve revolutions, without spilling blood; who conceive, that, to effect a scheme of liberty, certain declarations alone are necessary, and a few high-sounding words; and that an old dynasty may be preserved under a revolution. How absurd! And that equality is liberty! Whereas, as we are not masters of our destinies, how can equality exist? Since no two men are born equal. As to the common people, they must ever be labourers; for, in every age, they have the liberty of choosing between working and starving. So that, under every form of government, there must be working classes. But what interests them is, whether they will not gain more

under a scheme of liberty, than under a scheme of despotism, and have a chance of rising greater and higher. As to the middling and higher orders, despotism is moral death to them, and liberty moral life. But your formalists think, that liberty consists in words; and the word Republic is associated with liberty; and Monarchy, with despotism. Whereas, look to the United States of America, and ask the free citizens thereof how many millions of slaves they have? And if negro slavery is not as cruel and severe there as possible? This at once renders their theory of liberty ridiculous; because it is inconsistent. Liberty consists in habit and chartered rights; and a due balance of power between the three orders of a state—those existing upon labour—those acquiring—and those who have acquired, and who rest satisfied. Every civilized state falls into three orders—the people, the middle class, and the aristocracy. The last require distinctions; the first aim at becoming the second; the second at finishing their career as the third. Here, then, we have a state, and we must give all three their due weight in its government; that is, liberty. But we must rest assured, that no despotic king will ever consent to that. Therefore, in England

they had not accomplished their scheme, until they changed their dynasty, and elected the President of a foreign republic to be their king, which was a promotion. But no family will submit to a degradation; that is, after they have commanded absolutely, to be mere administrators; consequently, these formalists, who conceive that an oath to a constitution will fix a despotic king, are fools, and know nothing of human nature. If revolutions are to succeed, kings must first be deposed, and others elected; for the mass of the people of a state love monarchy, though seldom the monarch individually, because they think that it is a sort of perpetual umpire to settle their differences, and to quash individual aspirers to power. They love the crown as the symbol of their own power; though they may often grumble at the wearer of it. This they do often, because they do not think he wears it well. They think the crown is the servant of all, which was exemplified in the reply of the old woman to a Roman emperor, on her importuning him with a petition; he said, "Do you think I shall be troubled with your petition?" She replied, "Then, for what are you emperor?" This, in a phrase, explains the whole economy of the office. But the for-

malists understand neither the theory nor issue of revolutions. They are to be learnt in the passions of mankind.

Some of the more incautious of our party have been arrested. Others are watched. As for me, they had no proofs against me, but a violent suspicion, that made it prudent for me, even on account of others, and the good cause, to withdraw. I am aware that I am a marked man,—more from what I may do, than for what I have done. I do not blame them. Despotism is a very snug, comfortable thing, as long as it lasts. What more delightful than irresponsible government? What more pleasant than to extract as much money as we think proper from a hard working people? Indeed, is not this stimulating their industry? The higher they are taxed, the more industrious they must become. A diplomatist once said to me, “Large revenues, standing armies, and loans, were the luxury of diplomacy.” What means of glory! I do not blame them, more than I blame the brigands, who rob and murder on the highway. The principle is precisely the same. The brigand is hanged, when he is caught, and so is despotism sometimes overthrown. The one

are robbers with force on a grand scale, the other are robbers without force on a small scale. Their plan, practice, and principles are one and the same. To bring both to justice is praiseworthy ; but we risk our lives equally, from the brigands that take us up into the mountains, or the brigands who occupy large towns and fortresses. The only difference is, that the one are wanderers, the others stationary. It is my business to strive to destroy both, and to keep myself from being murdered by the one, or thrown into a dungeon by the other. Adieu !

RINALDO.

CLORINDA TO ROSALINE.

Florence, January 1st.

I CANNOT well express the ill humour I feel at this moment. I never before experienced such disquietude. It is more irritating than all the dangers and difficulties that environ me. It indeed comes more home into my bosom. Rinaldo's indifference causes these feelings. Yet he is not indifferent. Why do I call it so? It is that

he seems occupied with other objects. I have a dangerous rival in his love of his country. Yet should not that increase mine for him? Yet why does he not return it with more ardour? What a difference there is between his attentions and those of my intended! Yet how I loathe the latter. How a woman detests the attentions of one man, when she is taken by another! Fool that I am to think that I can conquer Rinaldo's stubborn heart. A man who has such vast projects, who is hourly risking his liberty, his life, can he be occupied by a love-sick girl? Ah! Rosaline, I blush for the expression. But your divine Shakspeare so describes us! What is Juliet? How well he knew Italy. Juliet is the type of an Italian girl. You say that our sympathies are unaccountable. They are indeed. So is also our happiness and our sorrow. Why should I look to peace and wealth? Are they the main sources of happiness? If so, misers are the happiest of mortals. They enjoy peace and wealth. This is what my mother is perpetually dinning in my ears. Not that misers are happy, but that their principle is good. Avarice is a mixture of caution and selfishness founded on the fear of want; and a love of peace is timidity. But

give me the storms of life. If they be frightful at one moment, they are delightful at another. It may be that I shall love Rinaldo more for his apparent indifference. What misery can be so great as to have nothing to do, no occupation? And this Rinaldo tells me is the curse of despotic government. This is why all active spirits love free governments, and strive to obtain them. Active spirits when restrained I am sure become sullen. Rinaldo says this is the reason, that the best books are written either in exile or in prison. If we had every path smooth before us we should be like monks and nuns; the only active movement in their breasts being hatred, envy, and malignity. The heart left to itself preys upon itself, and consequently preys upon others. My philosophy, Rosaline, is not of so high a reach as yours, but it relates more to my own observation in life. After this, do not think that I am preparing you to hear of my running away with Rinaldo. No, I trust I have too much dignity to take such a step; too much influence in my own family to render it necessary; and Rinaldo will not divorce himself from his country and his party, to espouse me solely. Alas! I am but second in his affections. His country has the first

place. Well! well! I shall never have another woman for a rival at any rate. That is a sweet consolation! Oh! if I had, I should become tragic; I should think of the dagger and the bowl. But what an horrid idea! How came it to slip from my pen! As a lioness is fierce in the protection of her whelps, so is an Italian fierce in her jealousy. Love's torments are love's delights, because they are mutually complimentary. But jealousy only belongs to true love. Would it gnaw our heart, if that heart did not feel a greater craving? Oh! Sibyl, tell me my fortunes—look into futurity—dive into the dark recesses of fate. What tutelar deity shall I implore? Will the Madona listen to me? She looks coldly on all alike. Oh! no celestial holy flame warms my heart now. I might as well woo the cold inconstant moon as the Madona. Her placid visage is repulsive to love's emotions: yet she is not without mystical tenderness. She is the emblem of the highest cast of creation—mother of the divinity, and queen of heaven! Oh! that I could propitiate her. To an Italian heart what a delightful symbol of divine grace! Yes, Rosaline, she is my propitiatory symbol. In her is love divine and universal. Oh! that she could breathe

grace especial upon her truest votaries. Look at the ideal modesty with which those of the greatest genius have portrayed her superhuman form. Can the bad passions approach her? Will they sympathise with her tenderness? Who, leaving her adoration, rising devoutly from before her sacred shrine, illuminated by all the celestial rays of her countenance, could sink into wickedness. Impossible! For she is the emblem of purity. Ah! Rosaline, what a comfort have you lost in not knowing the Madona. You who gaze on naked power absolute, without form or fashion. Who substitute for her gentle and gracious tutelage the chilling hand of fate. How can you stand alone in the midst of existence universal, without one moment reclining your head on the bosom of some symbol, personified and deified? Oh! you will ever be a prey to your own sensations. Without a help, they will overcome you and devour you at last. To you, Rosaline, I pour forth my unreserved and most secret thoughts. I will tell you my dream of last night. Methought I beheld two majestic and beautiful goddesses; one rising from the sea, the other from the earth. The one surrounded with sporting dolphins, with sea-nymphs; the other rising

in the midst of a luxuriant corn field, surrounded with fruit trees and flowers: they approached and embraced. On the one was written Venus—she who springs from the sea; on the other Nature. They embraced again, and their attendants hailed them as twin sisters. They approached, and each gently took me by the hand. Nature pointed out all the riches around, and offered to seat me in the midst. Venus shewed me her element, the lashing waves discovered the storm that was rising. The thunder rolled, and the lightning flashed. I was transported with awe and delight—I seized the goddess by the garment, and she instantly flew with me over the waves into the midst of the storm. Oh! Sibyl, is this dream prophetic? You see that I have made here Nature the goddess of the earth. I do like that designation of her better than a more general one. Tell me if you approve of the conceit of Venus and Nature being twin sisters. That may be without any violation to the rules of poetry, if we make earth the mother of both. You see how silly I am. Pardon me, and give me what comfort you can. Adieu!

Ever yours,

LA CLORINDA.

ROSALINE TO CLORINDA.

Bath, January 16th.

AH! Clorinda, how your heart has become entangled, and with kindred passions—love and devotion. You call on me to tell your fortunes; I look forward, and I shrink from the task, because I look back and shudder at the past. Who can follow the wild flights of Fortune, even in their mind's eye? Who can look about in the moral world, and not be bewildered and stupefied at unceasing inconsistencies? Can I tell you why successful villainy uprears his brazen front and rides us down in broad day; why bashful virtue, a threadbare starveling, shrinks into every bye corner; why fools kiss the rod of power; why honest men are chained to the damp floor of a sickly dungeon; why pious fraud throws her saintly garment over the hideous deformity of reckless vice—aye, and of grim oppression too; why man buys and sells his fellow man, to minister to his avarice, and lashes his back till the parched earth is soaked with his streaming blood; why the black offspring is torn from its sun-born mother's warm breast, and sold a devoted victim;

why do the worst passions here pluck up by the roots the tenderest affections, making religion a farce, morality an hypocrite and justice an insult, and reason the most flimsy sophistry, harrowing up our feelings of humanity, then plunging our moral existence in despair; and, more terrible than all, why the fiend Hypocrisy should catch sacred truth in her vile birdlime, and besmear us with her nauseous slime? Ah! hypocrisy, thou art like a splendid mausoleum. We are giddy in looking upon thy awful doom; we admire the beauty and symmetry of thy chaste peristyle, thy Corinthian pillars delight our eyes;—we open the narrow door to thy interior; we are blasted with the foul and stinking breath of the putrid charnel-house within.

Unriddle me the riddle of life, and I will tell thee thy fortunes. Do I hold the wires that make the puppets dance? When tormented by the contemplation of untoward circumstances; with the awful efforts of the wicked; with the hopeless efforts of the good—I exclaim: Such is the decree of Fate! Others twitch me by the sleeve, and cry: No, the will of Providence. Well, let us not quarrel about terms; be it so. The will of Providence, or the decrees of Fate. The end is

the same. No matter how we designate the cause, we feel the effects, whether we are propelled by the necessary impulse of eternal movement, generated by the vital principle absolute, which must constitute an irresistible fate, or whether we are subject to the irresistible decrees of an all ruling providence ; still, I say, we are led by an invisible hand. Let that hand then be the hand of God. But here you cannot humanize the divinity, and give him two natures ; here we cannot play fast and loose ; his nature must be one—power absolute. You say what a providential escape you had. Aye ! from what did you escape ? Was that without the influence of providence ? If your escape was providential, your risk must have been providential also. The mariner exclaims, oh ! I have escaped the storm ! Was the storm then independent of providence ? The same power that brewed the storm, conducted the mariner safe through it, and vice versâ. Well then, bring down the immortal gods here upon earth ; let us feast our vanity in assimilating their nature to our own ; still the results will be the same ; power absolute, to which all things are subjected. We must submit, because we do submit. We fret, and fume, and scold ;

what does it avail us? Only additional torture. With all our learning, we cannot read in the dark book of fate, except day by day, and then it is past, and of no use but to make us howl and mourn. Oh! ye puppets that fancy that ye are the governors of mankind! Ye conquerors that conquer air, what else is the bubble glory; who, filling up our vision with your gigantic form, assuming to wield the thunder-bolts of Jove, are at least chained to a rock to have your entrails torn by the vultures of disappointed ambition. My mind loves to contemplate the awful grandeur of power absolute, which I dare not deck out with symbols or personification. Yes, Clorinda, this is a true inspiration, the inspiration of truth. Still I admire the fervour of your devotion; substitute nature for the Madona, and I will join in your prayers. She is indeed my goddess; such as she has made me, so I adore her. This is dark enough; that is, I feel nature as she is presented to me in my own bosom. As she thus has framed that bosom, so do I conceive her, and conceiving her, I worship her. The affections, purely natural, are my code of morals; not man's interpretation of them. Toleration universal would go to annihilate selfishness particular.

Every object in nature is with me nature's symbol. My heart, striving to keep within the circle of pure natural affections, moves in its true sphere. I am not yet so decrepit as to want a crutch to lean upon. I repose upon the universe; I rest upon the eternal tide of the concurrent movement of things. But, like the mariner who cannot direct the storm, he strives to console himself with hope. Hope, like the sleepy poppy-juice, allays the anguish of pain, though it cannot banish all apprehension. Some have the faculty of swallowing larger draughts than others; you, Clorinda, more than I, and the Madona is the physician that hands you the cup; swallow it to the dregs, maiden, if it gives you consolation, for we are surrounded by so many disappointments, and hope so often promises, and so seldom performs her promises, let us fancy her an intoxicating draught, and quaff her off. Adieu.

ROSALINE.

CLORINDA TO ROSALINE.

Florence, January 5th.

I PROMISED you the story of the Genevra, and you shall have it. It favours much the doctrines of your fatalists. I say it was a visible interposition of Providence; and you say that and fatalism is the same thing, because such an interposition constitutes fate.

Well, I think it was about the early periods of the Florentine republic; certainly in the very early periods, that the story goes, that Genevra was the most beautiful maiden in Florence. Of course she did not want admirers. But she fixed her choice upon one, who was every way suitable to her, and who loved her tenderly, and whose love was as tenderly returned. But unfortunately, her father and mother did not in this accord with her wishes, and they pointed out another suitor, whom they supported in his pretensions to her hand, and who was superior in wealth to his rival. This courtship attracted the attention of the city; and all the parties being neither of ordinary birth, or situation, necessarily caused an interest generally to be felt

for them. She postponed, as long as she could, her fatal marriage with the suitor, whom her parents recommended, until she was wearied out, and could resist no longer. The patriarchal authority was at its height in the republic at that period, and although I am aware it is the best depository of power in general, and infinitely superior to civil police, yet every mode of power is liable to abuse. In this instance, the poor Genevra fell a sacrifice to the obduracy and the avarice of her parents. Her real devoted lover was in a state of distraction when he heard that the fatal marriage-day was fixed; he could not follow her to the altar, but he, in his phrenzy, desired to follow her to the tomb. The maiden was brought forth, bedecked in her splendid bridal garments, and garnished with gems, which the wealthy patricians of the then modern Tyre could well afford to display on their wives and daughters. Though a sumptuary law of the republic soon after reduced their magnificence more to a level with their trading pursuits. Oh heavens! I can fancy the poor Genevra tottering with uncertain steps to the altar, supported by the sympathetic hearts and arms of her bride's maids. Her cheeks paler

than their virgin robes; the flowers that they strewed before her were not redolent; what odour can soothe anguish? She seemed to tread on thorns and nettles that stung her feet; every wavering step leading to her grave. Oh! who can feel the anguish of her heart, drooping amidst all the pomp and pageantry! The deep drawn sighs, which heaved from her tortured bosom, pierced her real lover's attentive ear, and sunk him, like lead, to the ground. The trading-base husband seizes her reluctant hand, thrust forward by the haughty father. Her unfeeling mother bridles up her head; as a token that poor Genevra should raise hers, already sunk upon her swelling breast. The priests perform their office. Tears alone flow down the innocent cheeks of the bride's maids. Oh God! this is too much! such misery cannot profane thine holy altars in tranquillity. The ceremony proceeds—the bridegroom puts on her withdrawing hand the fatal ring, symbol of eternity of joy or woe. To her it is an adder sting, that nips in the bud her every hope: it thrills its deep anguish through her quivering heart! In vain the priest blesses the pledge. Hark! she shrieks, she shrieks, and then swoons—she falls. Her

bridal bed became her bier,* mocking woe by its splendour. The next night the awe-striking vault is opened: the same priest who united her living hands to those whom she loathed, now sings her requiem. Her bridegroom becomes chief mourner in the pageant. Ah! but who is the real mourner? That pale figure who glides along, emblem of the ghost that he may soon become, they descend into the tomb, which is hastily closed. It was in the month of October, when the refreshing breezes that are wafted over the rugged Appenines, cool feverish, but beautiful Florence. The clear silver bell struck one: it vibrated through the clearer atmosphere, and called to her to awaken from her trance. She rose. Oh! who can describe her fright? Let him hear your divine Juliet's rage before she takes the love-sleeping potion. My pen here stops. She rose, stripped of pomp; her fine form was shrouded in virgin white—still analogous to her real state. Oh! what a combination! A buried virgin-bride. To whom did she belong? Has not the tomb the power of divorce? Aye, this idea refreshed her more than all the autumnal Alpine zephyrs that come from the distant Rhœtian alps. An aperture had been left in the

* She was not buried in a coffin but laid on a bier.

hastily closed vault. The kind moon, here kind indeed, because she was inconstant, lit her with her mild countenance, and marked a long bright line for her to tread in. Oh! she struggled hard to force her way. Oh! she dreaded to look back, lest the disturbed spirits of her grim forefathers should pull her down again and stop her from telling the dismal tale of their prison house. Yet she struggled, and struggled hard. Love, true Love was before her, and Death; dismal Death at her heels! She fled from her bier to the real nuptial couch of her constancy. Who then would not struggle? She gained the upper air. Oh! she found herself under the majestic walls of the noble dome of Florence. Instinct guided her chilled, bare, marble feet: her silent footsteps strayed to her true love's mansion. Then distracted with grief, he too had thrown himself upon his couch before his open casement, fanned by the northern breeze to cool his phrenzied brain; when, in the delirium of his grief, he heard the soft accents of her well-known voice, he started up, and from his balcony he beheld her shrouded form. Horror seized him. Ah! blessed soul, cried he, rest in peace,—*Anima benedicta resta in pacè*.—Haunt not me, I am thy true love. Oh! I deserve it not! Drive me not to distraction. Art thou some fiend that

has assumed that saint-like form, to entrap me into eternal woe, was his reply; when he beheld her open her fine turned ivory arms and gently beckon him to descend. Oh! sorceress, away! away! he cried, Oh! Holy Virgin preserve me.—Oh! Holy Mary all hail! sanctify me.—Oh! my patron saint, guide me. In vain she cried, It is thy Genevra, thine own true Genevra, that calls thee down, to warm her frozen frame in thy feverish arms: come down; come down. Long was the struggle before the youth complied: with trembling, uncertain hand he unbarred the ponderous portal; raising his lamp, stretching and crawling on, until he heard her quick drawn breath: then he seized her chilled form, hurrying her swiftly to his mother's chamber, in whose warm bed she might recover. Oh! what was the mother's joy when he placed the buried bride in her own warm bed, trembling—chilled—exhausted—palpitating in every limb, raised from the dead, and starting from her bier: the middle position between heaven and earth. With her returning circulation, what a combination of ideas rushed upon her bewildered brain! Her former blighted love, sealed with all the pageantry of solemnized nuptials; then transient death;

the grave; then awoke, as at the last great day—to rise to paradise! Who now shall say, that Hope is not sometimes the rainbow that chases away the fleeting clouds of black and stormy Despair. The kind mother arose and carefully administered to her God-ordained daughter cordials and fruits; such things as the women, when weak and sickly, delight in. Her youth—her healthful, quick flowing blood soon restored her elastic step. Soon her blooming visage irradiated the love and beauty of a contented mind; enhancing thus the glory of a despaired of prize. But some days elapsed before she could venture to pay the homage of the oblation of her gratitude to the Virgin of the most Holy Annunciation, in whose porch hangs all the votive offerings, for such as have recovered from grievous ill from danger by land or sea. Here the grateful heart pours forth its fervent thanks, and seals those thanks by hanging up the representation of the escaped peril. Thither she met her mother. Ah! cried she, *anima benedicta resta in pace*—oh! rest in peace blessed soul. The Genevra passed on. The following day, again her mother accosted her: Did I not know that she was wrapt in her eternal rest, I should take you to be my daughter. To

which the other replied: I am your daughter. Holy virgin, defend us ! quoth the mother. And now meekly and humbly, on her knee, she the awful tale unfolded ; but return she would not. I am the bride of my first love—the solemnized nuptials have been dissolved by the grave—the dead mass has cancelled the living contract. Little agreeing they departed. The haughty mother still wished to have her as her prey. But now the holy mother church took cognizance of the whole affair ; the Pope's nuncio received his orders from Rome to examine into it. A day of solemn trial was fixed, and the two suitors both preferred their claims. The Genevra, more fresh than the morning vapour in the deepest valley of the wild Abruzzi, or in far Calabria, more modest than the lilies of the Val d'Arno, shaded by her veil, appeared between the two, to be a second time brought to the mart of selfishness, or restored to the plenitude of joy. The holy doctors did not leave her long in doubt. They declared that the solemnization of funeral rites cancels every worldly tie ;—that the church is infallible, and that its rites cannot be profaned by falsehood, which would be the case, had not divorce taken place even with this earth ;—that

they devoutly acknowledged a present miracle:— a miracle! a miracle! all exclaimed. A miracle, then, cut this Gordian knot. All hailed the miracle—all hailed the holy discovery. The Geneva was pronounced to be divorced by death:— she was restored by the omnipotence of God to life:—she was again a virgin bride that day; and the same authorities joined her hand to his, for whom she had manifested constancy unto death; and that ring that suspended life, given from the one hand, that had stung her to that transient death, now becomes the pledge of perpetual love, as its form was the symbol of eternity.

Well, Rosaline, would not I make a good novel writer? Have not I given you high flown language enough, in this pretty story? How many romantic maids would like to play the part of the Genevra? I wish you to write to me something upon the wonderful turns of fortune. But give me hopes. I do not like your perpetual gloom; but I am now fatigued, and I must conclude. Adieu.

CLORINDA.

ROSALINE TO CLORINDA.

Bath, January 2d.

I AM delighted with the story of the Genevra. It not only proves fatalism, but so does every story, so does every history, so do the lives of all our acquaintances. And yet we never meet a person in the street by accident, though in our slip-slop we say so. There is no accident in the vulgar acceptation of that term. Every thing that has form, that is a substance, is in space and time.—Therefore all its accidents, movements, predicaments, are necessary, because space and time are the necessary predicaments to its existence; and things then pass through them in succession. To be free, therefore, we must be out of space and time. That is, our ideas are free; but when the result of our ideas or desires act upon our frame, then we are fettered. So my ideas, my dear Clorinda, are now with you. But my person cannot be with you, unless a variety of circumstances should occur, all flowing one from another, and all chained together, which should cause me to meet with you, and then there would be no accident in the case either, but we

might minutely trace up every link in the chain, which would prove that we necessarily come together. Will, therefore, is free, positively, as far as regards to will alone—But embodied will, that is our person, is fettered by absolute positive necessity—So our intentions often accord not with our acts. A man's actions may be bad, and his intention good—and the contrary. If our actions could accord with our will, should not we be all rich and happy, and who would do any work in the world?—Therefore, constituted as our being is, there is an overruling destiny, that is the main spring of the watch that winds it up. Free will, then, is as the minor springs and wheels. Now I will try, on this intricate subject, to explain myself; for it only wants a little common sense, and to disembarass ourselves of previous prejudices, to come at a right understanding of it. All mankind admit two circumstances drawn from pure experience. That is, that birth and death are the necessary contingencies of living beings. Well, then, here we have two necessary cardinal points—Birth, the point of departure; and death, the termination of life. So both these are necessary, there is no avoiding them, because birth is necessary to constitute life—Without birth there

could be no life—And death must, from our experience, terminate life. Therefore both these circumstances are in space and time. That is, a man is born in a certain locality, and dies in another certain locality. And he is also born in that particular portion of eternity, which is designated by man as time. There appears to be a succession of time: but time stands still. We, who perish, succeed each other—Therefore the illusion is as when we sail down a river; the houses, trees, and fields on the banks appear to fly—whereas it is our bark that flies, and they stand still. Now infancy, youth, manhood, age, are thus flying, as it were, through life, all ending in death. Therefore I have established my two points: birth and death. And then I tie them together with a chain, which chain I call destiny. Therefore the length of this chain is the destined length of life. Now, we say, the death was occasioned by such a cause. That is erroneous. It was caused by the birth—because, take any death, and trace from the immediate cause of that death, the cause of that cause, the cause then of that other cause, and so on, you will arrive up to the birth. Always trace it backwards. So that free will was one of the working subordinate springs, which caused

the rolling on of the being, the whole length of the chain. But the death originated in the birth. Now if this be true, and it is difficult to overturn this reasoning, what contingency of life is free? That when the act appears to coincide with the will. I will do a virtuous action, and I do it. I will do a vicious action, and I do it. Well, this would be all very well, if any action, or feat, call it what you will, were insulated, if it had no previous motive, or did not act in concert. But what was the antecedent—and the antecedent again? Here then is a great dilemma. Now let us go first and examine the birth. This is a large question—The birth is the fountain from whence the streamlet of life flows. First, the sex is to be considered; then the parents, then the nation, then the position in the particular person, high or low, rich or poor. Then since the figure of the person, then the original qualities. Now, how all these are developed, in whose hands the person falls. What millions of contingencies are cross of other beings! Now she or he may be entangled in the destinies of another, as in marriage, for instance. What millions of accidents fall every moment, all of them necessary, all of them may be traced! All this proves that, as far as existence, that is,

physical existence, goes, we are downright absolutely necessary beings, each having a destiny, each thrown into a line, each born on a certain day, and dying on a certain day, as nothing could have prevented the death taking place on the day appointed by the eternal series of positive causes. It is this dark destiny, that I call "being led by an invisible hand," which is a poetic phrase. Now when we come into the sphere of religion, out of that of nature, we find all religious persons terming God Providence. That, that is his first attribute—Then we term him the Almighty Disposer of events—Then surely man does not dispose of events, if God does. Then all divines and theologians insist on the prescience of the Divinity, that is, that he foreknows what is to happen, from all eternity. Surely this constitutes a necessity that things must happen as they do, otherwise God would foresee what would not happen, which would be to foreknow a falsehood; that is impossible. So God foresaw, from all eternity, that Louis the Sixteenth would be put to death early in the French revolution. Therefore it necessarily occurred that he must be put to death. But then, logicians admitting this, at the same time assert, that it does not take away from

the wickedness of the people, who thus put him to death. And the whole argument amounts to this, namely, that God foresaw two things that would happen. First, that such a prince as Louis the Sixteenth would be born, would live a certain number of years; then, that he would be put to death. The other contingency that God foresaw was, that certain wicked rebellious subjects of this prince would rise up and put him to death. Now this having been foreseen long ages before the birth of the parties, has nothing to do with the wickedness of the deed; but it is conclusive of my argument of destiny. Because the foreknowledge of God in this instance is a proof of the destiny—Therefore Louis was destined to be put to death; and the Abbe Sièyes to say, *la mort sans phrase*. Therefore, from all time or eternity, call it what you will, Louis was destined to be a martyr, and the Abbe Sièyes to assist at the martyrdom, by a cruel, unfeeling, brutal speech; which, admitting even that the king deserved his fate, was cowardly and unnecessary. Therefore destiny has nothing to do with future rewards or punishments; and here I confess I cannot conceive how, *in a religious point of view*, the doctrines of election, reprobation, and pre-

destination of the Calvinists, can be got over— Because if God foresees and foreknows what men will do in this life, he must foresee and foreknow what their doom will be in the next ; seeing that their doom in the life to come depends upon what they have done of good or evil in this life. Now God knows from his prescience what they will do in this life, and therefore he must know what their doom will be in the next. And another argument, which will elucidate this, is, that as though life to come is consequent upon this, therefore it is in succession. Any thing in succession must be necessary, because succession is a string of motives to a continued action. So if I set off from London to go to York, I must necessarily pass over two hundred miles of England, in order to arrive there by the shortest route. So, if I go on to Edinburgh, I proceed on another journey, succeeding to the one that I have taken to York. Therefore if the happiness or misery of the life to come is consequent, and to follow this life ; God, who has foreseen what will occur to each individual during this life, must foreknow also what will take place in that life which is to succeed. Is there any divine who is ready to deny God's foreknowledge ?—And if he admits it, can

he restrict that foreknowledge to this life; that would be to say, that God sees what will happen to us in this life, but he does not see what will happen to us in the next. Then God is not omnipotent—Virtue and vice are beauty and deformity—Moral beauty and deformity, just like physical and personal beauty and deformity. That is the only way of getting over the question; unless, indeed, we admit the notions of the pure spiritualists, that idealism has nothing to do with realism; and that the soul's immortality is in the sphere of pure reason or idealism, and not in space or time. Now, Clorinda, I think I have rapidly given you some insight into the famous problem. Now you will ask when is there free will? Ah! that is a more difficult question—that is indeed very metaphysical—that is beyond nature. Free will, then, like impulse, is a quality. It has a relative signification, and is relative to itself, and not to the whole contingency of our being as far as life goes; it does not interfere with destiny. Free will is in the sphere of idealism, and in that sphere we find God, immortality, soul, moral laws, the perfection of beings, happiness, abstract good, abstract cause, concurrence, and a variety of other qualities that never can

come into time or space ; that can neither be proved or demonstrated—that we can only have a glimpse of—that we cannot thoroughly understand in our present modification ; for who can define any one of these except by feeling ; even when a person's destiny is most visibly active, free will appears to oppose it, but it is only an illusive appearance. The destiny marches on as steadily as we think time marches—whereas time, like the sun, stands still, and we slip through it. Take up *Clarissa Harlowe*, which, though thought tedious, is a most minute philosophical proof of cause and effect. It is a species of epic poem. The poet here traces the free will of two beings, good and bad. *Lovelace* is the height of barbarous, insolent vanity. *Clarissa* unites every virtue, meek and gentle, she is still firm ; but the overruling destiny of both conquered, and this is finely delineated step by step, every motive is traced. So that we cannot find a work in which the doctrine of necessity is more fully confirmed, though I am convinced that *Richardson* did not intend that ; but no one can write a detailed history of the passions, without proving necessity. You will, in tracing the persecution that *Clarissa* met with from her own family, from the activity

and cunning of Lovelace, from his brutal vanity—from her original high-toned feeling, that all the catastrophes were natural. It is a great study of human life. What then is the moral that I draw from all these instructive fables? That our destiny is overwhelming, and that it is folly to repine, that we should submit to the will of Providence with resignation, to the decrees of fate with calmness, and to the irresistible march of events with courage.

But then persons not acquainted with this subject cry out, Oh! pretty doctrine. That is, if every one thought as you do, Rosaline, what a fine disorder there would be in the world. Every one would feel that they would be at liberty to follow their own inclinations. Ah! I reply always: This is begging the question with a vengeance; this is asserting free-will. If my doctrine can influence any one's opinion, then the will is free, and you assume it to be so whilst I am proving the contrary; therefore nothing can be more absurd than to assert, that my saying that there is a destiny, which I think every rational person feels, will immediately give free-will to commit disorders; whereas those disorders that have been committed, have already been foreseen by the

Deity, and permitted ; and whereas I hold that no more disorders will be committed than those that have flowed down from antecedent causes. All I contend for is over-ruling destiny ; and to deny this you must begin by denying birth, life, and death ; for these three constitute the destiny. Giving in a philosophical sense credit or discredit to a man, is like giving credit or discredit to a picture, and not to the painter. Now, necessity, fate, and God, is what paints the man's life, and not himself ; because his birth is not voluntary. If we could *born* ourselves (I use a child's phrase) we could *dead* ourselves, then we could *life* ourselves ; then we might be *free*. But all springs from the simple fact, that our birth was not of ourselves but from our father and mother, and theirs from their parents, and so on.

Now for the analysis of the Geneva. Here you see at once the apparently contradictory principles of free-will and necessity. The Geneva was born with a strong impulse in her bosom ; her system of affinities were great and pure, and the spring of her internal movement pushed her to embrace affinities that were of the same stamp. Why did she not fall in love with the man her parents designated ? Because her system of sympathy

was repugnant to his. Then you will say, here she shewed free-will. Well, call it so if you please. But her dislike of him was a great destiny, and led to a great destiny. Well, her antipathy towards him increased in proportion as her sympathy increased towards her real lover. For what is love, but the highest sympathy? You say it is voluntary. I say not; because we cannot command it. We can no more love indiscriminately than we can hate indiscriminately; but we do not know why we love or why we hate. This is the darkest part of our being. We can never discover exactly why one man forms a friendship for another man, or one woman for another, or love between the sexes. This we can never find out *à priori*, as metaphysicians say, that is beforehand; we know it *posteriori*, that is afterwards; when we have the experience. Then we know not the exact reasons why one person should be endowed with better qualities than another. All this arises from the original impulse of their being, and not from education, which only develops these original faculties, and expands them, and gives force to them, but cannot create them. Thus the children of the same family, though they may have the same leading characteristics, yet all

vary, though their education is precisely the same. Education merely gives form and method to original instinct. What is law? Merely the form of instinct. What is religion? Merely sentiment. Disembarrass these things of the authority which we have been taught belongs to them, and then you will discover impulse, instinct, and sentiment, to be the three primary principles of our being, and the play of these constitute our destiny. All things that have movement must have a fixed destination; because that movement must depend upon original impulse, or be assisted by successive impulses. Therefore there is an imperative impulse in our being that we think is free-will; whereas that depended upon the force of the original vital principle, the direction that it takes afterwards as it continues in a straight line or a curve, (I mean morally,) and the lateral pressure of other impulses. We say mere accident caused such a marriage or such a death, or made such a one's fortune; whereas, in the common acceptance of the word, mere accident never occurred; but what occurred was brought on by a million of combinations of accidents, that brought these accidents to fall. Over all these accidents hang the destiny of the particular person or thing; that

is, what course he or she should take, and whether it should be good or bad. Now, when it is good, we are enchanted, and cry aloud! Oh! how lucky! Whereas it was as sure and as certain from the beginning that such would be the course of him or it, as that he or it existed; because what followed was a condition of existence. Now the Genevra's warm attachment to her real lover, co-operating with her warm feelings, overpowered her. What was here thought a miracle was only a singular combination. Then she was entombed according to the rites of sepulture of her country: not being dead, she awoke from her trance; the moon shewed her the aperture, and the whole impulse of her being led her to make her escape: having made it, she naturally follows that same impulse—that attraction—that affinity—and goes to the house of her real lover. In all this march of events I see a chain, a regular chain, and this constituted her destiny, because from the concurrent concourse of combinations, it could not have been otherwise. Therefore our destiny is inevitable. We may rave, and stamp, and weep, but come it will, and we must submit. Those are the strongest minded who submit with calmness, which is also a gift—it is a mercy in our

original formation. But when I hear grave people really blame themselves or others for their evil destiny, I say, with the French, "that makes pity," (*cela fait pitié.*) We may lament ill fortune, but we cannot blame it. Then they say, why punish? The answer is; that is a mode of life which is as imperatively necessary as any other mode of life; as clothing, manners, laws, regulations of any kind. Then they go on, and ask, why should God punish them? as we are told in church every Sunday. The answer is, does he not punish every day? How many of the best families are plunged into the deepest affliction by death! How many honest men become bankrupts! How many knaves thrive! How can we account for all this? Such is the march of our destiny. Besides, we have no experience that he will punish in after life. Many religious sects deny that dogma altogether. For instance, the Unitarians, who are a most respectable sect in point of manners, habits, and wealth, and education, in England, deny future punishments altogether. Many sects leave it in doubt. Nothing is certain on this head. There seems to be, on the part of mankind, a universal feeling of immortality, which I feel with the rest.

But there seems to be no further dogma beyond what each one lays down, and which is denied by another. Therefore the doctrine of future punishments is by no means an universal one among enlightened persons, and on all these things there are so many interpretations, that the wisest heads are puzzled to see their way through them. Thus I have referred all things, that I cannot demonstrate, to feeling. For when we examine the human mind clearly, we find every thing to be referable either to demonstration, or to feeling; and what we cannot demonstrate, we must feel, and so the contrary. Now there is no demonstration of what we have not yet the experience, therefore we must refer it to feeling. Those, therefore, who feel that there will be eternal punishments, feel those punishments in advance; therefore, they are punished during their lives, which, to them, is an eternity. I fear, Clorinda, that I am wearying your attention; but you will see, from the hints that I have given you, that, if you examine yourself or your friends, you feel that destiny is unalterable and inevitable. Let us now analyze fortune; she who, as Lord Bacon says, “ *will consign a king from a throne to the halter, and will place a peasant upon the*

throne." Each person has his particular destiny. It must be observed, that the highest intellectual destinies seldom attain great wealth. The destiny to fame is by truth. The destiny to riches is often through falsehood. I mean not here in the contracted idiom of falsehood, that of telling a lie—I mean acting a lie through life—pursuing a false system. Mean, sneaking, grovelling souls live in the sphere of perpetual falsehood—great elevated souls the sphere of perpetual truth. A system of despotism is a system of falsehood. No part of it is in harmony with truth. Systems of positive religions, if taught exclusively by authority, leave no room for truth to intervene, because they will not allow the blind authority upon which they are established to be questioned. These systems lead to great wealth in the professors; because wealth in these professors, though not the ostensible object, is the secret object. So is a system of arbitrary government; it is a system of wealth to a few. Great souls cling to fame, and despise wealth; they usually die poor. Hence a destiny to wealth is not the highest destiny. Look at two boys at school—a Tom Jones and a Blifil. Mark their progress through life; the first will have a destiny to fame; the second to

wealth. The first, if he enters Parliament, or meddles with government, will take the popular side of the question—will question authority, and watch it. He will nobly defend the rights of his countrymen; he will be indignant at any act of oppression, and swell with pride and exultation at the glory of the victims to it. View the conduct of the other. He will support authority at all hazards, and upon all occasions. He will rack his brain to find excuse for tyranny, plunder, and fraud. He will esteem all happiness great in proportion as it leads to power and riches—that is, not power of his countrymen over others; but his own mean, base power, to enable him to become rich. Analyse this, and it arises from a downright selfish feeling to be far removed from want, farther than others. This passion is quickly acquired by churchmen, because it is inherent in thir order; the object being to render that body as rich as possible, because they say that they hold the keys of Heaven. Therefore they ought to have greater power than those who hold the keys of earth; therefore they ought to be better paid. But mankind ought now and then to inquire into their title to such arrogant pretensions. They have, therefore, a great des-

tiny to riches; for positive religion and wealth are synonymous. What wealth Constantine the Great, the founder of the most modern system of religion, found in the overthrow of the preceding one! So, likewise, did Henry the Eighth. But still overthrow these systems as often as you will, they spring up again, in a new form; therefore, I may say the church is a direct destiny to riches, for it may be overthrown and lie fallow for ages, still it springs up again, for its destiny is to wealth. Man will pay highly for what he is most ignorant of; and ignorant and imaginative terrors are always more alarming than real ones. The old proverb is true; every thing unknown is magnificent; then we must pay for it. But fortune is sometimes just. Sometimes, when she has frowned upon us in our youth, she will smile upon us in our more advanced age; and we seldom see men prosper at every period of their lives. Those who acquire great fame and power when young, die at an early age. Those who have had a stormy youth, beset with difficulties, have a delightful mild sunshine in the evening of their lives. How pleasant it is to contemplate these things, and to watch the sudden turn of fortune; to witness all her capricious frolics!

How whimsical she is, how coy, then how lavish ! How like our own sex ! Do not we, Clorinda, love to play fast and loose ? Not me, nor you, for we are both downright, and have had the same sort of education men usually have, with some of their power superadded to our own. But the generality of women, what a singular way they have of viewing things ! What fancy ! How much outward objects influence their imagination ! How little they examine with care, and how very narrow their scope is ! But how fortunate we have been to have had another system of education ! Dean Swift, that great master of the science of human nature, says, “ that he never knew a woman that was worth any thing, that did not prefer the society of men to that of her own sex.” But if such a system as that that *we* have been educated in, that of analysing every thing, were to be more general, we should be too powerful, for we should unite the advantages of both sexes. You see what a powerful influence queen Elizabeth’s age had on society. What a great *man* (if I may so speak) she was ! I am convinced, from what I have observed of history, that the system of education of the women of that age, was the cause of the resistance to Charles the

First, which established the liberty of England. The destinies of the nation were not then so much to riches as to liberty and fame. It is very rare that riches can at all coincide with either liberty or fame; because they create selfishness, which is the parent of cowardice. Still we all covet wealth, because we all covet power. To those who have wanted it, it comes with double advantage, and even gratification. You never have wanted it; I have; therefore, you will not bear misfortune either so calmly, or so devotedly as I shall. Ordinary misfortunes will not then sink deep into my heart, because I have not been pampered, and I am shielded against vanity, and a great misfortune would take my life, because it has never been supereminently valuable to me, for I should leave little behind me worth regretting. Soldiers of fortune have always been brave for that reason. What do they leave behind them to cause them to regret life? And, after all, excepting with some weak-minded bigot, the terror of death centres itself into the mere sorrow for the loss of life. But I shall urge you no more; you know how fond I am of running on; on this subject my pen would never stop. I strive always to console myself, and you, and

other, by canvassing fate and fortune. Adieu !
Excuse this long unmerciful epistle.

ROSALINE.

MRS. BELMONT TO SIR A. ATHERSTONE.

Bath, January 25th.

I RECEIVED, my dear Sir Arthur, your obliging message by our friend, Lord L***, as well as several letters, which he brought me from Paris, and one from my old friend, the Marquise de B. You have often heard me say what a delightful creature she was ; but rather affecting too much sentiment, which is hardly ever safe, coming from so pretty a woman. She has not a particle of coquetry in her whole composition ; and Lord L*** tells me that the Count de Montvaliant, whom you may remember last year in our society in the Rue de Varennes, pays her great attention. This is a pity. Montvaliant is handsome, has great address, and is daring to audacity. But he is a vile profligate, vanity is his ruling principle. He has seduced more women, and killed

and maimed more men in duels, and ruined more dupes at the gaming table, than any man at Paris. He affects to be the champion of France in these three detestable pursuits. His insolence is unparalleled, for I have seen him in society knit his black brows, and curl his mustachios, and frown many a quiet woman into submission. The men view him with distrust, and as a general enemy, with whom they may have each instant to measure swords, and the women crouch with fear of him. Yet he can assume gentle manners at times. His anecdotes, particularly of the wars, which he has much frequented, though more I believe in the spirit of a knight-errant, than an efficient officer, are entertaining enough; and I blame myself in having given him the encouragement to have often listened to him. Certainly he would give one the notion of a Don Galaor, the profligate brother of the chaste Amadis de Gaul, or a Gaston de Foix, or any of the old knights in Beaumanoir, if he had not that self-sufficient vanity that one can never feel entirely at one's ease with. For no woman can guess how far the man will not go, who has long made a reputation upon setting all public opinions at defiance. His fatal dexterity with sword and

pistol ensures him the transient respect that an Algerine corsair receives from merchant vessels, when they appear at sea. A discreet woman is obliged to listen to this man's insolence, or run the risk of having her next kinsman's or friend's throat cut by him.

But, however, we have a young man from the sister kingdom here, that can match him; aye, and out-do him too, as much as the modest and chaste Amadis could out-go Galaor. He is 'yclept Sir Reginald Lascy: his fortune—his disposition—the tout ensemble, so much resemble my niece, that I must try to be particular. As she is the lineal representative of the house of the De Veres; so is he of the De Lascys, both great Norman leaders under William; the one family settled in England, the other in Ireland: both the pink and rose of chivalry for centuries; the very quintessence of aristocracy, and both features are strongly marked in their descendants. Like Rosaline, Sir R. has preserved only a few hides of land (to speak like an antiquary) of the immense domains of his ancestors; but he has preserved all their fire—their generosity—their ardour undiminished in his breast. He is about thirty years of age, and, though young, was emi-

nently distinguished in the late wars. At sixteen he led a forlorn hope. Twice, with small bands of men, he covered perilous retreats. He has been praised by his commanding-officer until he has been put out of countenance; and he has declined foreign decorations, lest he should appear a charlatan. His education has been scanty, but he makes up for it by a great deal of vivacity, tempered by the most polished and urbane manners I ever saw. There is a chaste romantic gallantry in his manner and sentiments, that render him particularly captivating to women, although he is very lame, having come here to have a wound cured in his leg. This accident impedes the quickness of his motion, but does no harm to the general effect. By stageing him a little, I have been thus particular, for he is the only man that Rosaline seems to take an interest in since she has been here: precisely because she should not. A great name, high blood, and a small fortune! enough already on her side without allying herself with her *double* in every respect, and to produce a race of Don Quixotes. Do not suppose, Sir Arthur, that I am her rival: indeed, were I but twenty, I think I well could be interested; but I am grown a

little more staid now. This Sir Reginald is come at the most inopportune time possible ; because Lord L*** is much taken with Rosaline, and in a fair way of being smitten. Here are large possessions with a vengeance. I wish I could send Sir R. to Paris, to dispute poor Madame De B.'s heart with Montvaliant ; that would make a fine match between these fighting cocks. But I am talking like our rattling friend, Sir Harry, in the language of the cock-pit. Really I am in a fair way of being in the centre of a romance. Will you come again and take a part in it ? Oh ! do. You will see my philosophical, moralizing niece in love. How delightful ! *Che grande piacere per noi*. But, seriously speaking, with all her moralizing, there is one thing, and only one thing, that shocks me about her ; with the exception of the day I took her to hear the great preacher, I can never get her withinside of a church. She has a thousand excuses : " What can they teach me that I do not know already ? " she says. " I know more of religion than half the parsons do. My life is a continual state of prayer, for I tremble at impending fate : those who endeavour to explain theological mysteries only get deeper into the mire. Milton never attended divine worship. I pro-

fess," she always adds, "the religion of Milton,—that of Fenelon—of Butler;—the religion of the heart, (*quietisme*,) inward intensity of feeling." These are her excuses. Lord L***, who is sceptical, and well read in the German authors, occupied Rosaline very much, until Sir Reginald arrived, at my evening parties; and then we had disquisitions upon Professor Kant's system, with other learned theories upon the human mind. Lord L*** is a very agreeable person; but his travels in Germany have spoiled him. All our young men, who have resided there long, come back liberals and sceptics, which terms are now synonymous: and now-a-days, even women are beginning to reason, and unfortunately reason always makes people sceptical; and I shudder at what the world will come to. Chemistry has done a great deal of harm; and as for geology, it is downright heathenism. Cuvier, I think, infers eight deluges, and talks of the millions of years that the globe has already lasted. This comes of the rage of examining every thing; analysing, as my niece calls it. You, Sir, have escaped these pernicious snares, by being a dilettante of the fine arts: how much more preferable! I am sure poor Rosaline has been bit by some mad German philosopher,

or their unintelligible books, which has quite unsettled the girl's wits upon religion. On every other subject she is a perfect creature: but here she fancies that she has taken a higher flight than Mahomed or St. Paul. What does she mean? Does she intend to set up a new religion? I made her laugh the other day: there was a Baptist chapel shut up and a bill on it, *to be let*. "There, Rosaline," said I, as we were driving past, "hire that conventicle and preach; your doctrines, I warrant, will ensure you great fame." She took it very pleasantly; and said, "I do not come from a land where they deal *in brimstone*. My system would be too tame."

You see, Sir Arthur, whenever I write to you, how my pen runs on. You have made your peace, and I will allow you to come down now: we are all very gay. Adieu.

Ever yours.

BARBARA.

ROSALINE TO CLORINDA.

Bath, January 26th.

I HAVE felt more interest here, my dear friend, this last fortnight, than any time since I have left your charming society ; and the only alloy is the uneasiness that I feel at your tremulous position, and the fears I entertain from the knowledge of Rinaldo's fearless character, that his safety may be in jeopardy. You and I certainly love daring characters. Indeed, so most women do ; whenever it is tempered with mildness of manners, then it becomes exquisite chivalry ; because such men have a high devotion towards our sex. This is the reason, *they* feel the full force of their being ; they riot, as it were, in the energies of nature. Cruel and malignant men are seldom manly or generous ; and no tyrants to our sex equal to mean and pitiful bigots. Rinaldo is none of these. I have made an acquaintance here with a young man whom you would like, who may have the energy of Rinaldo's character ; but with more enthusiasm, with more vivacity. He is, however, very difficult to describe. He has been bred a

soldier, which to me, born as it were in a camp, with all my early impressions, among military men, is particularly pleasing. Certainly, the foundation of his character is prominently military, but he partakes much of the best characteristics of his native land—Ireland—that ill-fated land of genius and of sorrow. His eloquence is warm, rapid, and overwhelming. The words leap from his heart—escape through his mouth, without passing through the crucible of his head. He shines in a storm of eloquence, a Ciceronian appeal, as in *Catiline*. These burasche or storms are terrible; the thunder of his voice, and the lightning of his sentiments astound his audience. I will repeat to you one verbatim, as he poured it forth last night. It was in reply; he burst forth, like a Roman orator, thus: “Oh, Ireland! Oh, my unhappy country! How many centuries past hast thou been struggling against that despotism and fanaticism which have generated an oppression, such as Lord Clarendon, in his day, tells us, no people, the Jews excepted, ever yet groaned under; a people, whose tenacity of the vital principle has been such, as not to have been quenched by habitual proscription, extermination, fire, sword, and famine! The Romans

respected, and embraced to their bosoms, the Samnites and other daring neighbours, who had most stoutly resisted their arms; they became the most favoured citizens. But the Romans knew not fanaticism; they felt no religious bigotry. Their legions protected all religions; their warlike eagles spread out their fostering wings over valour, wheresoever they discovered it. It was reserved for fanaticism, vainly boasting of charity, pretending light, and covered with the thickest darkness, to draw from under its hypocritical cloak the black bowl of poison, and the brand of discord, faintly glimmering at first, until blown upon by the furious breath of exasperated sects, and then rising into flames, which have scorched humanity. The funereal pile of justice, and reason, and liberty, has been long burning in Ireland, lit up by the fiend-like hand of fanaticism. Its subtile ministers, assuming opposite sides, have revelled for centuries in its most intoxicating orgies, with the brand of discord to light their path, in their left hand, and the sword of persecution, and often of extermination, in their right. They have ransacked every corner of the land, impiously calling itself

that of saints—saints, who have baptised their offspring in blood, and swathed them in chains,—a land, where man's folly, corruption, and cruelty have been more conspicuous than even in the country of the Incas—the hunting grounds of the human blood hounds of Spain. Fanaticism, (blush, oh ye, her blind votaries!) is the teeming mother of these horrors. Her throne is seated in the midst of the kingdom of darkness; her empire extends over the kingdom of terrors; shadows and visions are the instruments of her vengeance, and epidemic madness the ground-work of her deadly rule. That mystic fanaticism, engendered by fraud and malice, founded on credulity, and adopted as state policy, which has revelled in the orgies of Bacchus, which has offered up human victims in the forests of the Druids and on the scaffolds of the Inquisition, which has armed the malignant tongue of the cynical Knox, and sharpened the exterminating sword of the hypocrite Cromwell, which has spit forth its venom in the penal code, and now forms the pillars that support the temple of legitimacy!" But I shudder at the frightful picture which I present

to you from his colouring. Why has my pen so run away with me, in telling you of this? Am I infected? Have I had a new scene opened to my wondering eyes, that has struck me so much aghast? Has Sir Reginald Lascy infected me with his warm feelings for his wretched country? Am I interested for him, or for his country, or for both? Do I mix them up together? Whither am I going? What am I saying? Ah, Rosaline! you may find subjects to arouse your warmest feelings of indignation and sorrow, without fanciful grief, in your vain struggle with the fates! Every day I grow older, I find more real objects of fearful interest, which rather increases the terrors of impending fate, as it renders my existence more complicated.

Clorinda, this last week a new subject has been opened to me. This frank, this generous, this eloquent soldier has detailed to me a short history of his unhappy country. His education has not been finished; but he possesses a sound mind, and an overflowing heart; and what do we require more? Am I the more happy from my youthful years having been passed in intense study and reflection—in being thirty years of age, although I have completed but twenty; in having

been up late and early—in the many wakeful vigils which my tormenting thirst after knowledge has prompted me to exhaust my health with? Ah, Clorinda! why all this labour, to unlock the secrets of nature, or to discover the invisible hand that leads us. But I cannot, after all, tear the bandage from off my eyes. I can no more ascertain the future, than I can account for the past. If there be a mystic world of spirits, surely I have been a most zealous candidate for their sisterhood.*—I who have looked with so much anxiety to discover the way thither; but who, baffled and disappointed, have been left as much

* Rosaline was too sensitive and too intelligent a being not to feel that inward impulse which declares the immortality of the soul; though she knew not the way of it. Kant, the great Kant, thus asserts immortality: “But the moral law, which commands every rational being to realize the IDEAL of moral goodness, would have neither meaning nor force, did not man exist for ever, since an eternal existence is necessary to this infinite progression. The moral law, therefore, were irrational, but for the assumption of THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL. By facts, by the wonderful construction of the external world, by the *voice* of the moral law *within us*, and moreover by the necessity, so universally felt, of a belief in something higher and eternal, reason is compelled to form the religious ideas of *God*, *Providence*, and *immortality*.”—CRITIC OF PURE REASON, page 167. London, 1824.

in the dark as the sable African, who basks in his sultry desert. I trust, my next may be in a gayer strain. But you, dear Clorinda, have the picture of my mind. My letters are an inward looking-glass.

Adieu, dear friend.

ROSALINE.



THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Bath, January 26th.

I HAVE taken the first step, dearest Clorinda. You must prepare now for a personal description of Sir Reginald Lascy. He is about thirty years of age, tall and well shaped. Exercise, fatigue, and an early military life have formed him strong and muscular, and have bronzed his face, though he is fair; having curling chestnut hair, and dark blue eyes, subject to various expressions, often melancholy, often extremely lively, and sometimes fierce. He is both choleric and impatient of contradiction. Roused to fury and indignation at the bare mention of any act of baseness and oppression, his descriptions are lively, and his enthusiasm unbounded. He has a singleness of purpose, quite admirable; and no child was ever so incapable of deceit—This proves the keenness of his courage, which is conspicuous in every turn. His soul knows no fear, because it knows no selfishness. His sentiments are perfectly liberal, though his manners are those of a cavalier. When alone or absorbed, his carriage is haughty, betraying a consciousness of superiority; but in

addressing others, assumes a most winning courtesy. There is not the least alloy of vanity in his whole composition; yet he is not without his weaknesses. He is extremely flattered by the attention of women. He has not only art and perseverance to become a man of consummate gallantry; but he even commands, like a dictator, the whole sex. And I fear that his greatest fault is, that he is indiscriminate in his attention to them. Suffice it to be a woman, old or young, of high or low degree, he pays them equal attention. She must be a superior one indeed to fix him. His affections she may fix, but I doubt whether any of the sex can fix him entirely. His generosity, in every sense, is unbounded. Thus he has been idolized both by soldiers and women. His greatest fault in society and manners is, that he is too much occupied with the subject that at the moment interests him the most. In this particular he is a little overbearing; but he is so sincere and enthusiastic, that one readily excuses him. He is extremely proud of his name and family; and likes to recount how many of his ancestors perished upon the scaffold, or on the field. He does not regret the vast possessions which have passed away from them; but is rather proud

of that circumstance, as it shews that they were men of energy or spirit. "Your dull rogues," he observes, "have never a break in their dull lives or lineage. We have been beheaded, drawn, quartered, slain in battle, proscribed, and exiled, and confiscated. Our ready swords have ever sprung from their scabbards to avenge our own honour, our countrymen's rights, or the nation's interests. No man is a rebel, when justice is on his side, and conscience dictates the moment to draw." He has never thought much about religion or politics, in the abstract; and he is guided more by warm and generous sentiments of honour, than any fixed principles of obedience to authority. Such men are more dangerous to arbitrary power in a state, than more calculating ones; because they act upon the impulse of the moment, and that impulse is often irresistible. It is the same with him in private life. He takes a woman's heart by storm, before she is aware of him. I had almost forgotten to say, that his voice gives him great power; it is rich, full, and harmonious; he manages it with dexterity. His expressions are forcible and correct, though his arguments are rather entangled, when they are not what is termed argumentatively assertive. But there are

various modes of argumentation, the most powerful when well managed, like that of Hobbes—the argument descriptive—and there the hearers draw the conclusion. Of all arguments, those in use with lawyers are the worst, the most entangled, the most obscure and tiresome. His port is noble, and air very graceful, although a very severe wound in the right ankle renders him very lame. But my aunt and I both think this is no disadvantage, as it pulls him back, and his occasional extreme vivacity might derogate sometimes from his dignity. I do not describe him to you as perfect. There are too many lights and shadows in his character—His gusts of passion are unjustifiable—His admiration of women appalling to a wife—His chivalry apt to engage him in quarrels, both personal and political—And his warmth in the latter would, in dangerous times, affect his character for discretion, and compromise his safety. I assure you, he is no ordinary person; and if the fates so decree, he may yet shine at the head of an army, and wear the wreath of laurel as gracefully as an Alexander, whom he much resembles. You see I have carried him up to an high comparison. You will say, it is my

partiality. Nay, my love, be it so. “Still I am led by an invisible hand.” Adieu!

ROSALINE.

P. S. As I could not send my letter yesterday, I must add another sheet to it. I have now two more declared admirers, Sir R. L*** and Lord L***. You have had the description of the first, hear that of the second. My lord is a very great man in many respects, in this country. He is of an old stock—great family connexions, and vast possessions. He is not quite so old as Sir Reginald—has travelled much, and profited much by these travels. He brought away, I understand, a great stock of Greek and Latin from Oxford, and a great deal of metaphysics from Germany. Knows the politics of Europe well—he is liberal in sentiments, and is very ambitious to become a man of business, in which no doubt he would shine, with the many advantages that surround him—if those many advantages (I love a seeming paradox) would not give him hindering assistance, because they impede the intensity of exertion upon one point, and there are no encyclopedic great men. They must shine in one

particular alone. No doubt that, by becoming his wife, I might place myself very high in society in London; but that to me is a paltry ambition. It is what every landlady of a popular inn; on a frequented road, attains to—to see many faces—exchange two words of civility, and then it drops. The fine lady keeps an inn without profit. I adore the goddess of liberty, wherever she is to be found—in public, in private life, in the affections. Why should I imprison my affections? To marry without my heart being full, every crevice of it occupied, is to imprison the affections, to a woman of sentiment; and no woman is a real one, that is not so, even down to the washer-woman; a marriage that has any reserve is the prison of the natural affections. Are chains less fetters because they are made of gold? Is a palace less a prison if we barter it for our liberty in the highest sphere, that of our affections, in which liberty can reside? No, my heart yearns to be full, because my mind dwells on uncertainty. I spurn the tyranny of selfishness, the tyranny of vanity, of ambition, of forms, of conventions. I bow down to that only of self-dignity, the self-reverence of Pythagoras. Well, then, welcome liberty in the sphere of the affections. Let me

fill my heart up to the brim. I have no hesitation in the choice. Rosaline will never be inconsistent. Sir R. Lascy shall have my hand, for this simple reason, because he possesses my heart. I hold that reason to be the foundation of all virtue. Let us carry home this most important and interesting contingency of our existence, into every other. Truth would assume undivided empire among men. If a woman is false in this particular, how can she be trusted in any other; for nothing will keep her true, but the full occupation of her heart. Neither the poppy juice of sermons, nor the terrors of the *level lake of brimstone*, nor the fear of shame, nor expulsion from society. Her heart alone must be occupied, or it will be filled by peevish resistance—stubborn contradiction. Abandoned to the full play of my intelligence and feelings, I dare not do otherwise, lest I should endanger my self-reverence; because I am assailed by no terrors, exterior or interior. All I fear is the loss of moral dignity. I consult my reason, and I dash formalism under my feet. I consult my heart, and I follow its yearnings, corrected only by self-reverence. Thus, Clorinda, I have accounted to you for my choice. Many will reprove it, but do they feel in my bosom. I

told you before, we are all the centre of our own existence; this is one of the sayings of my dark metaphysics. Here is an explication of it. My heart is its own centre—it seeks that which is necessary to it, and spurns the rest. Thus there is unity in its action. It is true to its sympathies. True, though admitting fully the doctrine of impulse, consequently of free will. You will ask, how can I be fettered in my march through life? Here there is no inconsistency. Our will does not always coincide with our destinies. For it is the affirmation or negation of this contingency that constitutes happiness or unhappiness. The ancients held, that destiny controuled the gods—Destiny controuls the freedom of the will, because the outward phenomenon of man, that is, his appearance, is subject to eternal laws, to succession, and to positive power. But his will is subject only to the force of his individual impulse. Pope expresses it neatly enough: “and,

Binding nature fast in fate,
Left free the human will.”

I wish every luckless maiden could read this letter. How many more happy marriages would there be—How many more children educated in truth—How much less formalism, the parent of

oppression, would then exist. Wives would then be men's mistresses, instead of being their yoke fellows or their slaves—and harmony, existing in families, would be extended to the state. But I am getting speculative. I am about, Clorinda, to do almost as daring an act as you, with the exception of the dangerous political contingencies which threaten your comfort. Money, after a decent competency, I despise; fame was never acquired by it—on the contrary, riches are the grave of fame, because the stay of exertion. I wed the noblest aristocracy—that of fame and recollections, rendered sublime by antiquity and military achievements, which are more glorious than present honours—Power shifts like the weather; it is in the hands of the busy fates. Above all, my heart will be full—not a crevice left unoccupied. Hence, lead on, ye fates—I am ready.

ROSALINE.

CLORINDA TO ROSALINE.

Florence, January 17th.

I ENCLOSE for my dearest friend a letter from Rinaldo. He had received hints that it would be necessary for him to shift his position; and however unhappy I might feel at his absence, I was obliged to consent. He sent the letter by a mountaineer from Genoa; the faithful peasant I have well rewarded. His letter was sewed up in the lining of his jacket, and he waited to intercept me going to prayers, to hand it to me. I copy it for you, for I am sure you will read it with interest.

Genoa, Jan. 9th.

A safe hand will deliver you this letter, which I trust for the present will calm all your apprehensions for my immediate safety. I am here lodged in the house of a friend, and that I may not be troublesome or useless, I have insisted upon working in his mercantile office: he gives me invoices to make out, papers to copy, and calculations of profit and loss to draw up. If my

ancestors, of some seven or eight centuries ago, whose banners floated on the walls of Jerusalem in the Holy Wars, could peep out of their graves, and see a Count de St. Rocca Cacciano a volunteer clerk to a Genoa merchant, hunted from his estate, driven into exile, because he strove to regain the privileges which they enjoyed, and the same liberties for the people that they had supported, they would indeed cry out: Oh! the days of chivalry are past.—If they cast their eyes and beheld what wretched things the continental kings of the present day are; the mean and cowardly, and contemptible instruments of bloody usurping corrupt factions; the drivelling fools of some knave of a minister: what comparison would they make between the valiant and heroic kings that led them to battle and these perjured scarecrows? Perjury is now part of the religion of these regal tigers called the continental despots. If some of the old kings were tyrants, at least they were not perjured, and the patriot's steel could reach their heart. But now the pyramid of corruption is reared on the shoulders of a debased, priest-ridden, bigotted people, and the machine is directed by some score of vile clerks. The whole plan propped up by Jews and money-lenders. The

Jews and the priests are the buttresses of the whole system. Let us knock them down or shake their foundation, and then the whole fabric of tyranny and corruption comes tumbling to the ground with a crash. I have thought much of government, and am convinced that it ever assumes three forms. The best is, as in England, where the three elements are combined—monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy—for the principle of monarchy is depression, the principle of aristocracy is prudence, the principle of democracy is violence. The first will reign exclusive, the second desires to preserve, the third to acquire: this is what I am exiled and forced to become a mercantile clerk with a chance of being hanged for. But Italy is rich; therefore she is a prey to her neighbours. Her wealth, her luxuries, her soft enjoyments, make her cling to peace. Peace! oh! humble peace! the peace of the grave! Her ancient monuments are venerated—her arts, her sciences. All the ornaments of age that constitute her boast and pride are so many securities for her tranquillity. Oh! luxurious slavery, how thou enfeeblest our hearts! Who will stir first? Who can stir? Can we rely on a simultaneous effort to strike off our golden chains? Shall we tear off the chaplets that

adorn our brows to supply a laurel wreath. I know that ladies like a minute narrative better than any thing like reasoning—therefore you shall have it.

I got very safe to the bay of Aspetzia, but here I had some suspicion that a pursuit was on foot. In a village between that place and Borgetto my horse lost a shoe. I was standing in the forge, my guide had gone into the house, when I perceived a woman with some impatience leaning over a door opposite beckon to those behind her, and cry, “Venga, venga subito!”* and look with a countenance of alarm and anxiety. I guessed she saw the sberri.† I immediately hid within the forge, and looking through a hole, I saw the blacksmith take off his hat respectfully. Presently I came out: I asked who had passed? He said two sberri, who had arrested several on that road lately. Fortunately, the smith had thrown his cloak over my horse’s back, as he was warm, which hid the saddle-holsters and his appearance, otherwise they would have discovered me. I found fault with all the shoes, and made him remove them, in order to gain time. My guide was

* Come, come quick.

† Police officers.

drinking. I then sallied forth, and I found out from a boy that was driving goats home, that the two men on horseback had gone into an inn, and put up for the night. As it was not on the road, I passed on, and in an hour arrived at the place where I intended to sleep—having gone fast, meaning to be off early next morning. Here I regaled myself with wine—sour mountain wine—black bread and chestnuts. Presently I heard horses' feet at the door. The guide who was with me cried, "*Siamo perduti!*"* Down stairs he ran, and rushed out between the *sberri*. They called out to him to stop—he ran down the road, and one of them after him, firing a brace of pistols at him. In the mean time the other came up stairs with a pistol in his hand. He kicked open the door, but seeing me standing up with a pistol ready cocked in my right hand, and a dagger in my left, he started back, and fired at random. I sprang forwards—he fell on his knees, crying out, "*Eccellenza, eccellenza, perdona, misericordia!*" I struck him with the hilt of the dagger a blow on the head that made him stagger, and told him, "You have your life. I will make your fortune

* We are lost.

on condition that you accompany me." He promised he would. "Swear," cried I, "by the Madona and by all the saints in the calendar, and by your patron saint." He did so. I threw a piastre on the table—we rushed down stairs. My saddle was not removed, but I mounted the horse with his collar only, and on we rode. I kept close to the fellow, with the pistol at his head, until we had proceeded two miles. "Villain," said I, "if we do not arrive safe at Genoa, you die, contrive it how you can—either by sea or by land. The horses were fresh, and could well march all night; at day-break we reached the sea. Here was the puzzling thing: what I was to do with my companion? I found that he was a true prototype of an agent of continental government—cowardly, cruel, and superstitious. I found, therefore, I could only trust to his fears and avarice. I promised him largely, and got from him all he knew, which was little, respecting the motives of my arrest. He said that his companion was the superior, and the one who was entrusted with the direction of it. He declared that it occurred in casual conversation that I was at the forge, which he had heard up at the inn, that he had inquired into it, and then had pursued me. By this time

I got to the sea-side. Here I sold my horse to a peasant, and obliged him to do the same, and also his pistols. He was now committed, and in my power. He felt it. The peasant lived far off the mountain, and was on his return from having brought down a cargo of hides: so that there was no fear of the horses remaining in the country to discover us. This bargain was made on the road, and not near any house; the horses went for a third of their value. I then got into a boat, and by taking advantage of the boatmen's advice, contrived to get into Genoa without notice. The sberro is fully committed, and has become my servant, and is perfectly well contented. I may hereafter make great use of him, and at present there is no fear of my being discovered. But I confess to you that I think for the present, that our hopes are shipwrecked—there will probably be three or four sets of victims before we may succeed. The aristocracy is destroyed by the laws for the division of property among the children at the father's death. No longer can they feel an interest in their families, because those families cease to exist. Consequently, all opposition from them is null, and they in future must seek places at least to supply the deficiency. The

middling orders are watched by police, and spies, and informers—ruined and sent to prison. The common people consigned to priestcraft and superstition, and military execution if they stir. Thus the despots have made all slaves alike. Equality we certainly have, an equality of slavery.

Adieu!

RINALDO.

ROSALINE TO CLORINDA.

Bath, January 30th.

I WISH you joy, a thousand times, my dearest friend, upon the happy escape of Rinaldo. He may lie concealed any length of time in such a great busy commercial city as Genoa. I wait the progress of events (which, indeed, we all must); but, I think, you need be under no apprehensions for his immediate safety, and you must be constrained to await the good pleasure of the fates. I am convinced that the liberties of Europe will never be established, until you have the full co-operation of the middling and common people; or, until some great man, surrounded by a handful of devoted patriots, should strike such a terror, by some great operation, that he will gain over to himself public opinion. This can only be done by one bold stroke; then the people are driven in a new direction. But a revolution made by theorists, by philanthropists, by speculative lawyers, never yet succeeded. I write to you upon the most famous day in the annals of English liberty. The beacon-day,

when it blazed forth to the uttermost parts of the earth; the ever memorable and fatal 30th of January, when Charles fell. This was the era of freedom, so celebrated by our immortal Milton. That fatal stroke, however, enabled the parliament to come to their famous declaration, "that the people, under God, are the original of all just power." But our liberties have ever been preserved by the same bold means. Henry of Lancaster drove out the faithless effeminate Richard the Second, and he ended his contemptible career in Pontefract castle. Richard the Third perished in the field, a glorious, happy, and redeeming death. His courage, and Shakspeare's divine pen, have thrown a sort of lustre over him, that shades, as it were, his crime. The bigot James was driven from his throne, but the modern mode seems to be, to compromise with tyrants, as if these hyenas could ever be reclaimed. The lion is a noble and generous animal, and with him, if you feed him well, you may be safe. But no gorging will ever subdue the appetite for blood of the hyena or the tiger. This our ancestors well knew, and they acted accordingly. Why is a murderer, a ravisher, a housebreaker, always executed? Not only for

the sake of example, but because society cannot tolerate such a one guilty of these crimes ; they must be lopped off, like a rotten branch in a tree. Well then, why should a people harbour wholesale murderers, ravishers, and housebreakers, which tyrants are, for some of them have hundreds of thousands of well armed men in their bands. Clorinda, I feel that I am using strong language for a woman, but it is come to this pass. Women must now exert their influence in the society of men, and strive to stop the savage rage of tyrants and their followers. How many widows are there now weeping their incarcerated husbands, who are either dead, or dying a cruel, lingering death ! How many sisters and mothers covered with sad cypress wreaths ! Oh, Clorinda ! let women preach a new crusade. Let us laugh at the mock philanthropists, who have attempted their mock reforms, and have disgracefully failed. Let us, as in the times of chivalry, refuse our favour, our hearts or our hands, to any but the chivalrous men who will embark in the cause of liberty. A woman's Syren charms should not be polluted to support these tyrants and their base followers. Oh, ever blest chivalry, rise again ! Shake off the polished

sloth of this false age ; mount your barbed steeds and ride down oppression. We want more of the stamp of the aspiring “ youth that fired the Ephesian dome.” See mock piety, led by credulity and terror, hobbling in the train of despotism, appealing to a God whom they ever insult, making him impiously a God of vengeance, of robbery, and of murder, calling on their pretended saints to intercede. What can shock us more than such insulting hypocrisy—such daring and shameless priestcraft ? Oh, Ireland ! how long will you, seeing these things, be the victim of such absurd and wicked systems, and cruel delusions ? Oh, man ! will these clashing elements of discord never elicit from your flinty heart the true fire of intelligence ; must you be ever seeking how to crush it ? I can no more, the bare thoughts of these great things cause such a palpitation in my breast, that my feeble frame cannot bear it. Oh ! my heart was never made to be contained in so feeble a frame ! It will burst or waste to death its tenement at last, but its sentiments will remain. I appeal now to hearts—brave hearts—and not to heads. Oh, that I could electrify them all ! Courage, courage, is the first quality in men, and our business

to create it. No law, no constitution of government, no habits, will ensure liberty, if there be not courage in the mass of the people to enforce it. If the people are tamed down, they will ever be trampled upon, because justice never yet existed with rulers. They are ever striving to become absolute, and there is no guarantee for liberty but courage. Were not men kept in awe of each other by duels, what society would exist? How could women stir abroad? Man is naturally usurping, rapacious, tyrannical, and unjust, and he can only be kept in order by others as violent as himself. Oh! but the fates—the fates call me back to my prison house. Poor truant that I am, I have skipped about for some half hour; they have allowed me the liberty to frisk only to twitch me back, and I feel how their cord cuts my neck. Whenever I see a poor beast fettered, I think of human kind. Adieu! For you shall not partake of my melancholy.

ROSALINE.

P.S.—Excuse this fervent strain. My new *society* has thrown me into the sphere of angry politics. How we take impressions from quarters where we are interested! *He* has been more

particular. *He* has pressed my consent: I have given him the same reason I have done to another; but, alas! I fear it will not be available—I must yield: but I am ashamed to surrender so quietly—I shall blush when I see his rival; I fear there is now an end of my philosophy. Well, it has supported me hitherto: the ardour with which I have embraced it has carried me out of a woman's sphere of existence. Indeed, I find now that I am a very woman. Away go all the fine workings of the brain when the heart is captivated. “Thou, Nature, art my goddess! to thy laws myself I dedicate.” Indeed, Clorinda, she is mistress. She forces me to acknowledge, that though my education and head have been those of a man, my heart is truly a woman's. Eloisa was a philosopher: splendid were her talents—deep her researches—vigorous her fancy—and overpowering her language; but Eloisa's heart was not full; when it was, the energy of her head was transferred into her bosom. The description of her passion has *alone* created a great poet. Yes, the warmest, the most splendid, the most impetuous flow of elegiac verse in our language. I can no longer reach these haughty flights of reason: I am, indeed, subdued. I adore nature, and you

the Madona, which is but Nature's most beauteous symbol. Call me no longer Sibyl, nor call me Eloisa; call me after my namesake, Rosaline, and say:—

“There is a gentle lady:

“When tongues speak sweetly, then they name her name,

“And Rosaline they call her; ask for her:

“And to her white hand see thou do commend

“This seal'd-up council.”

Yes, Rosaline returns to her true sphere. She has been truant: she has, indeed, been a very intellectual vagabond; but now she is fixed at last. Oh! joyous prison. Oh! happy fetters. May they last for ever! Oh! what have I heard?—a whisper from the grim Fates. Haste, thee! Haste, thee, in thy sportive vein! it *shall* not last: Maiden, we are at thine elbow! Beware! Alas! alas! how cruel! Adieu, Clorinda, you are not haunted by your evil destiny.

SIR A. ATHERSTONE TO MRS. B. BELMONT.

Paris, February 4th.

WITH tremulous hand I opened your letter. My first resolution on reading it was, to fly to Bath: the second to fly thither. I cannot return to the former footing of pure friendship: These are your conditions: with the terms of this capitulation I cannot comply; and yet I durst not trust myself to remain in London. A few hours would have served to have broken my resolution. I have surrendered the most sacred deposits that I ever could have possessed—the testimonies of your favourable opinion of me. A momentary ebullition of joy transported me out of the verge of discretion, and has quenched my hopes. Your lively civility cuts me to the quick. How can you dissemble so? I cannot libel your feelings so much as to think that you are in earnest. This, though, is my cursed vanity. But, I am trenching upon the terms of our capitulation. No rather let me imitate you—you who have given me the first example; let me rally you—divert you with the details of the diversion, the scandal of this gay city.

Let me plunge into all its dissipation. My fortune is considerable enough to run a splendid, though possibly a short career. This suicide of fortune, decency and reputation, shall be made to appease your former wrath ; for your present indifference, I swear by all the sacred altars of the most sacred passion, is fictitious. Thus, when I am immolated, you will possibly pity me. I will throw myself at the feet of any gay nymph that may smile upon me. She shall, in a golden chalice, hand to me the water of oblivion, which to your health I will quaff off. Adieu.

A. ATHERSTONE.

ROSALINE TO CLORINDA.

Bath, February 3d.

IN the new sphere in which my being is agitated, I fall at once into the deepest reflections. Away with former logic—with reasoning and philosophy. All is impulse in me now. I do not ask myself, ‘Have I a soul?’ but I feel that soul. I do not seek to discover what it is; but I exclaim, ‘Here it is!’ for I feel it. Aye, it fills my heart until it makes my brain giddy. Who can define the soul? He who can define God! Who knows where the soul is? He who knows where God is! Is it free? What can restrain its flight! How rapid its transitions from grief to joy—from rapture to despair! Has it a form or mould? Is it tangible or visible? Can we grasp it in our hand or imprison it in our bosom? Clorinda, it is with you—with Reginald. Then it is driven back by a frown of the cruel Fates, and it sinks like lead into my own bosom. Ah! was it lead that sunk then, or the stroke of a dagger? The fates hover ever over us with their poniard pointed: yet free and sportive as may be the soul, it fears to quit

its accustomed tenement, trembling and doubting where again it may be housed. Will it fly through the arch of heaven and find no resting place, no hospitable orb where it may alight; or, will it be lost absorbed in the soul universal? Where does my own soul end, and that universal one begin? Tell me that, Clorinda. Mark well, gentle damsel, the partition between mine and yours; and mine and Reginald's. Do you know the partition between your own gentle soul and Rinaldo's adventurous spirit? How then are we mingled into one intellectual existence? for we know not how to separate our souls; and when the fates tear them asunder, they quench our sensitive being. No one yet has seen the soul; no one yet has seen God—yet all *feel both*. Both then exist, because we feel them; both then are *free*, because we can neither *grasp* nor even *touch* them. Love, gentle god, what art thou? The invisible mingling of kindred souls. True Religion, what art thou? The invisible mingling of our soul with the soul universal. Are our own souls, then, controlled by Fate? Ah! that secret lies in the darkest cavern of the deep unfathomed ocean. But Fate hangs over our enslaved bodies. His icy hand is

ever stretched out to seize his prey; for our body is a constant debtor, and he will be paid forsooth.

Pity it were, Clorinda, that the noble essence of our souls should ever be incumbered with this sorry debtor to dame Nature; and yet, can it escape? If it be not imprisoned here, it can hardly be so when the body is dissolved. Oh! that it may then soar far and wide, free as the sun-beam that dances and spangles in the morning dew.

Love is one high *discovery* of the soul; the intellectual spring of existence universal. From the love of God sprang all existence; from our own love sprang one and another: for why do our offspring partake of the character of their parents' kindred souls? Attraction, affinity and sympathy! You cold philosophical phrases, that once interested me, you have no place in Love's vocabulary. Nor will I contaminate *love*, sacred *love*, by either a definition or a quality; for *love* is the *soul* in its highest form, when it most emulates the divinity. How easily, when roused by love, the soul concludes its own immortality, for it would then live for ever. Am I a sceptic now? I told you when the heart is full, the head doubts not;

for then our being is complete. Some fill it with real, and some with ideal devotion, and I now with both; for my ideal devotion devolves upon that power, which has formed my heart capable of such real devotion. Oh! Clorinda, I now can understand you; and, understanding, how I can feel for you!

ROSALINE.



CLORINDA TO ROSALINE.

Florence, January 18th.

MY dearest friend, I have another letter from Rinaldo, and I trust that my coldness will have in time disgusted my intended. I am so much my father's favourite. Pietro Perruvini is still at Bologna—Rinaldo is gone away too: so that my mother and the Abbate, having every thing agreeable to their wishes, leave me alone, and strive to see what time can effect. I insult the Abbate whenever I meet him—am cross to him—contradict him flatly—ridicule him—and when he begins his dissertations, I observe: “Abbate, you would not be so eloquent if Pietro were here to answer you.” My mother is boiling with rage; but she does not speak because she fears an open rupture, and my father is very much annoyed at the great ascendancy that she has assumed in the house, and that all his friends are driven away. Sometimes he does not speak for two or three days together to my intended—Turns his back upon him in public, and is but coldly civil to him in his own house. All these are encouraging circumstances. Rinaldo's letter I enclose, or rather

the extract, that will interest you ; for, in other parts, he says *such kind and civil things to me*, that I blush when I read it. And I have read it over *ten times*, and *blushed* so much every time that I dare not communicate it to you—However, enough of this trifling.

“ Genoa, Saturday.

“ YESTERDAY as fine, noble, and daring an act of devotion took place in this city, as ever has illustrated the patriotism of ancient Rome.

“ A young man, who was deeply in the secrets of the late events, who had been entrusted with the most dangerous secrets, and held even a list of names, all of whom would have been prosecuted, met his mistress coming out of church. This young woman was a wife of the secretary of the police, and consequently well informed. With an agitated countenance she whispered in his ear, “ *Tutto è perduto.*” She then assured him that an order was issued to seize him and his papers ; and that he must make his escape. What did this brave young man do ? He fled : but to his own lodgings ; which he entered just before the officers sent to arrest him. He fastened his door, and replied to their demands of entrance, *Al’ora—*

Al'ora. He deliberately burnt every *paper*, left no vestige that could be traced ; and then, either that they should not have the satisfaction to seize and torture him—or that he should not hereafter be induced to make any discovery, under the impression of illness, fear, imprisonment, or torture, he opens the window and plunges from the fourth piano into the street. Here indeed was a patriot. This glorious sacrifice must one day or other be appreciated, when the history of these sad times shall lie before the world. The black deeds of tyranny, and its miscreant partizans—Partizans of tyranny ! Heavens ! what a notion ! Yet such wretches, degraded below the level of the most brutish of brutish beasts, are to be found in every age, and in every country. They are brutish beasts—the vilest vermin—and should be rooted out. With them there should be no convention. They abandon their prerogative of men, in becoming the bloodhounds that hunt down and worry men ; and should not be treated as men, but exterminated like wolves.” You see, Rosaline, how strongly he writes—Indeed, I am terrified when I read his letters ; and ask myself, why such things are ? You, who know more, have often told me, because we all desire power—And then

the extension of that power is equal to the selfishness, the malignity, and the cowardice of our own disposition. I have heard you say, that you could discover the disposition of a child, from its amusements. I have often heard you say, also, when you have been reading history, how much you pity princes, for the bad education that they have had; and who must, by being so much fostered, have rendered them selfish and cruel: and that they are surrounded by courtiers, who are naturally more slavish than other nobles; by the worst of priests and women, who never having a chance of having their persons exposed, are selfish and cowardly, and consequently cruel. Princes are indeed to be pitied; always surrounded, from their youth, by such persons; duped, flattered, every frailty blurred over or extenuated—every foible praised—Jealousy inspired in their bosom against virtue, because it is rugged—Taught that they alone are the *state*, the *people*; and that, by conquests, they may become the *world*—Never allowed to analyze their own power; persuaded by the clergy, that it is held in trust from the Almighty, and to be exercised according to certain forms—that to question it, in any guise, is blasphemy—Both priests and princes abhorring ana-

lysis. Both loving darkness rather than light—because power ever holds her stern rule more absolutely in the kingdom of darkness. You praise the education of youth in England, because it is in public schools, where they feel a practical equality, and are knocked about. And you say, that you owe your own popular feelings to having had such an hard infancy—moved about from garrison to garrison, by sea and by land, and exposed in your most tender years to every privation and hardship; and, that your first impression was in the West Indies, where you were born—in the midst of slavery—where men are bred as brutes to labour, divested of the common rights of humanity. I have also heard you say, that you always heard, and your mother pointed out to you, that the slaves on a woman's estate were treated more cruelly than on any other. This is your grand argument for the extensive instruction of women: that if women are not either enlightened early or very tender by nature, if they have power they always misuse it; and that the greatest miseries that affect countries, arise from the pernicious advice of women; the mistresses of kings, the wives of ministers and the chiefs of party. And you have said, that

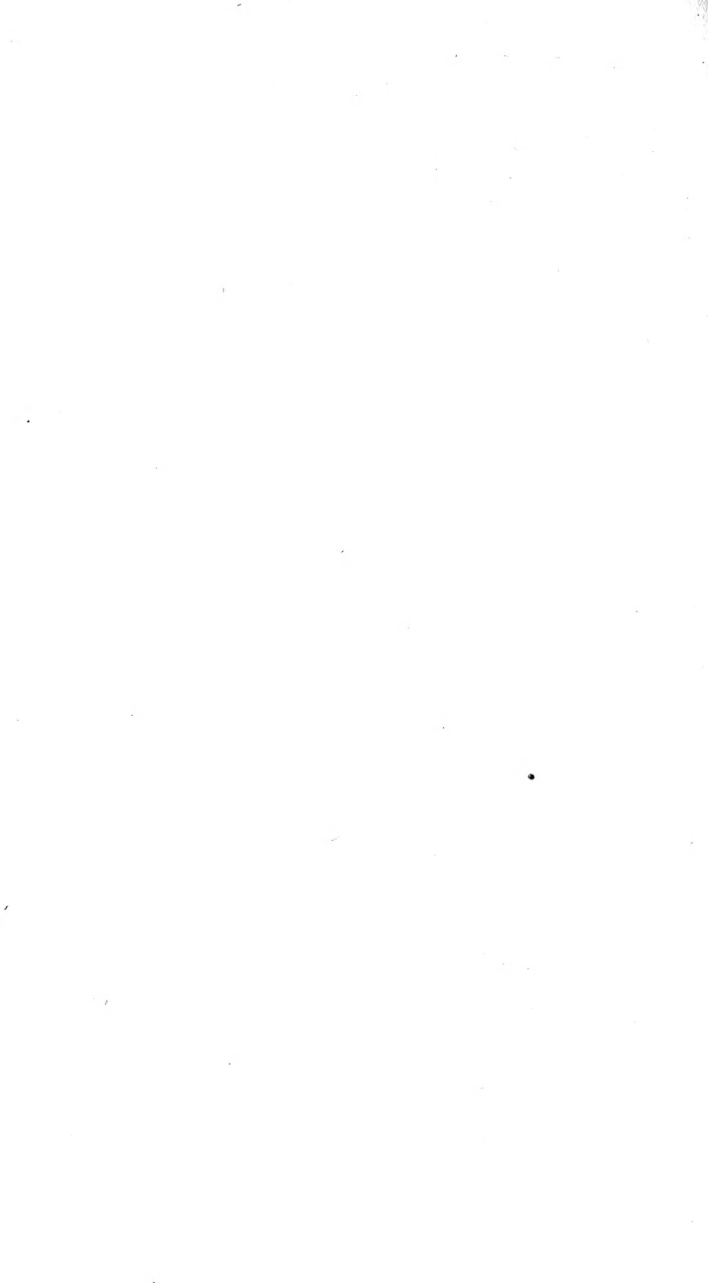
so inveterately inclined to oppression is our sex, that when a woman is not bigoted in religious matters, and liberal in political feeling, it is much more a proof of a strong head and a good heart, than the manifestation of the same feelings in a man. I throw back all your wise sayings in your teeth, madam, for I feel the force of them.

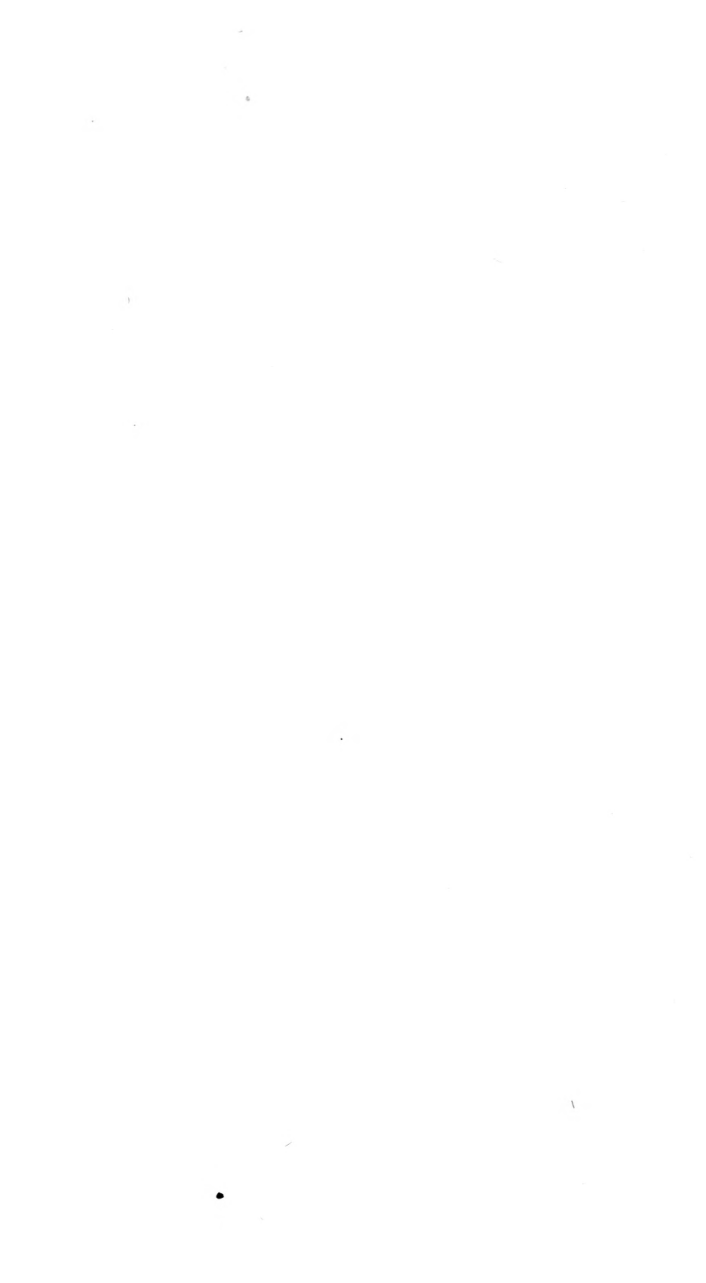
Your's ever,

CLORINDA.

END OF VOL. I.







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